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AN

A P O L O G Y

FOR THE

Rite of Infant Baptism,

AND FOR THE

USUAL MODES OF BAPTIZING.

IN WHICH,

An attempt is made to state fairly and clearly the Arguments in proof of these doctrines; and also to refute the objections and reasonings alleged against them, by the Rev.

DANIEL MERRILL, and by the Baptists in general.

BY JOHN REED, D. D.

Pastor of a Church and Congregation in Bridgewater.

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. For the promise is to you and to your children.

ACTS 2d—38, 39.

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you; and ye shall be clean.

EZEK. 36th—25.

So shall he sprinkle many nations.

ISAIAH 52d—15.

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.
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ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME person, acquainted with my design, announced in a publick News-Paper, in the beginning of the last summer, my intention to publish a Treatise on the Subjects and Modes of Baptism. The work was then commenced, but its completion and publication have been greatly retarded by the prevalence of Sickness and Mortality, within the limits of the Parish with which I am connected.

=====
District of Massachusetts, to wit :

BE it remembered, that on the Twenty-sixth day of March in the thirtieth Year of the Independence of the United States of America, John Reed, of the said District, hath deposited in this Office the Title of a Book the Right whereof he claims as Author in the words following, to wit ; “ An Apology for the Rite of Infant Baptism and for the usual modes of Baptising—in which an attempt is made to state fairly and clearly the arguments in proof of these doctrines ; and also to refute the objections and reasonings alleged against them by the Rev. Daniel Merrill and by the Baptists in general. By JOHN REED, D. D. Pastor of a Church and Congregation in Bridgewater.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled “ An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned ;” and also to an Act entitled, “ An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled an Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned ; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints.”

N. GOODALE, Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

A true copy of Record.

Attest, N GOODALE, Clerk.

INTRODUCTION.

IN compliance with the request of many respectable Friends and Acquaintance, I now present the Publick with an *Apology* for the *Rite* of infant Baptism, and for the *usual modes* of baptizing. My intention is to show, that these Doctrines, which have been so strenuously opposed, or wholly neglected by some, are of great importance, and clearly authorized in the sacred scriptures.

Although the understanding ought always to control and regulate the passions, yet in common experience, we often see the reverse. We see reason dethroned and enslaved. The passions predominate and draw aside rational creatures into such opinions and practices as are unreasonable and immoral.

Many persons, who profess a regard for moral obligation, and the great duties of morality, are ready to imagine that they may with the utmost safety and propriety, treat with indifference or contempt, those institutions of Heaven, which are of a positive and sacramental nature.

We readily admit that a competent degree of evidence is requisite, in order to convince us rationally, that an external Rite or Sacrament is of divine appoint-

ment; but voluntary ignorance or unbelief, through inattention, prejudice, pride, or any other criminal defect or cause, will never excuse us from guilt.

A sincere and prevailing disposition to know the will of God, and to obey his requirements, whether of a positive or moral nature, is essential to true holiness. That person, therefore, who considers and treats positive institutions, in a contemptuous or negligent manner, commits a crime of the most heinous and daring nature. He impiously arraigns the Wisdom, Goodness, and Authority, of Almighty God.

“ Sacraments are positive Rites, and in themselves different from moral virtues; but a disposition to obey God and Christ, is a moral virtue, and there can be no morality without it. To obey the divine Commands, is a moral excellency, although that obedience may consist in a conformity to positive Rites.”

Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his Son. This was an unnatural and positive order; but his obedience to that hard command, was a moral virtue of a most exalted and excellent nature. The Israelites were commanded to sprinkle the blood of the paschal Lamb, upon the posts of their doors. This was a positive order, and not in itself necessary to their preservation; but it was made the indispensable condition of

being spared. They who neglected to comply, were exposed to the fatal and inevitable stroke of the destroying Angel.

Institutes of a positive nature are evidently important; and to observe them, is our incumbent duty. The Christian Baptism is an ordinance of great importance; instituted by Christ himself, and constituted the discriminating Token of regular admission into his visible Kingdom.

Christians of every denomination, will allow that our Saviour expressly commanded his Apostles to baptize; and that baptism was administered by them, and by their successors, in the times of primitive Christianity.

The Quakers are the only sect who pretend that the ordinances of Water Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, ought to be discontinued. Their principles and practice in these respects are singular and strange, but not unaccountable; for they hold that the Spirit of God is of higher authority than his Word, and a superior rule of faith and practice.

I have not, however, in the following Apology, undertaken to confute the Quaker system. My sole object has been, to vindicate the doctrine of *infant baptism*, and the *usual modes* of baptizing, by endeavouring to state in a fair and conspicuous manner, the arguments in favour of these practices;

and by attempting to answer and confute the objections and reasonings alleged against them, by Mr. Merrill, and the principal Baptist writers.

The Work is divided into four principal parts.

The 1st Part has reference to the subjects of Baptism.

The 2d Part has reference to the Modes of Baptizing.

The 3d Part is a brief account of the evidence resulting from history, and especially in proof of the right, of the infant children of believing parents, to baptism.

The 4th Part is an Appendix, consisting of familiar questions and answers, adapted to persons of different prejudices and capacities, and suited to the present state and circumstances of the controversy.

In executing this plan, I have expressed my thoughts with respect to three of the former parts, in a series of letters addressed to the Rev. DANIEL MERRILL, now the Pastor of a Baptist Church in Sedgwick.

I have preferred the epistolary method of writing, supposing it would be the most interesting and intelligible. I have addressed these letters to Mr. Merrill, because that gentleman, having been a Congregational Minister for several years, has of late altered his principles and practice, and has published a number of sermons, &c. against the

lawfulness and validity of infant baptism, and in favour of immersion, as being the only lawful and valid mode of baptizing; which publications are circulating in various parts of the country, and particularly in this vicinity, and therefore merit a particular reply. I have not, however, had an exclusive respect to this Author. It has been my constant aim to refute the objections of the Baptists in general; and to manage the arguments in such a manner, as would effectuate the most extensive and lasting utility; and prove equally instructive and beneficial, even to those who have not seen Mr. Merrill's Discourses.

The intelligent and well informed reader will perhaps feel disgusted with the frequent occurrence of repetition, prolixity, and old arguments. My only excuse is this, that I have uniformly endeavoured to avoid obscurity, and to write as intelligibly as was possible—in such a manner, as to be understood, even by the weak and ignorant. I have accordingly studied perspicuity, more than comprehensive brevity, and plainness of speech, more than elegance of diction.

The conclusiveness of various arguments adduced in order to prove any particular doctrine, is often very evident, when we properly consider their consistency, connection, and united strength. Truth dreads nothing so much as the ignorance, inatten-

tion, and bigotry of mankind. It solicits enquiry, and a careful unprejudiced investigation. Let me then invite the reader to peruse the following Apology with care, with candour and with impartiality. I ask this as a *duty*, which you owe to *yourself*, and to that *Being* to whom, both the *Reader* and the *Author*, are equally accountable.

And now, my Friend, may *you* and *I* be willing to adopt, individually, the Poet's Prayer, and say sincerely ;

“ Father of all ! whose cares extend

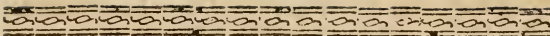
“ To earth's remotest shore ;

“ If I am right, thy grace impart,

“ Still in the right to stay ;

“ If I am wrong, O teach my heart

“ To find that better way.”



AN
A P O L O G Y
FOR
INFANT BAPTISM.

L E T T E R I.

SIR,

YOUR Sermons on Baptism, having been put into my hands, I have endeavoured to peruse them with attention and impartiality; but have found no new argument, either against the practice of baptizing the infants of professed Believers, or in favour of immersion, as being the only valid Mode of Baptizing. The subject is, perhaps, on both sides the question, nearly or quite exhausted. It may, however, in some instances, be possible to state the old arguments more intelligibly, and illustrate them more clearly.

Your case, as it appears from common report, and from what you have published, is, in some respects, somewhat singular; and the singularity has excited the curiosity

of individuals, and has occasioned a considerable demand for your publications.

You are, Sir, an entire stranger to me. I have no knowledge of your person, nor of your character, but from your writings. You certainly seem serious and sincere in what you have published to the world. I have no reason nor inclination to question your sincerity; but we ought to remember, that Mankind are liable to be sincerely wrong, as well as sincerely right. I believe, Sir, that your present sentiments are, in some respects, erroneous, with regard to the ordinance of the Christian Baptism; and, if it were in my power, I would, in the *Spirit of Meekness*, convince and reclaim you; but an event of this kind, is probably not to be expected from any quarter. Experience and observation have taught me, that when persons become profelytes to any religious sect, they seldom return. This, I believe, is generally true, not only with regard to the Baptists, but also with regard to Sectaries of every denomination. If the following letters addressed to you, should not produce the desired effect on your mind, they may have a tendency to prevent others from falling into the same supposed error.

Having mentioned your Text, you proceed to state “several propositions and plain truths, and to quote various passa-

“ges of Scripture, which have some refer-
 “ence to Baptism;” but, Sir, all this proves
 nothing, pro or contra. These propositions
 might have been stated and passages quoted,
 with equal propriety, by a writer on the op-
 posite side. The question between us still
 remains undecided. Indeed it is not so
 much as stated, and yet you conclude your
 first sermon by saying, “We see that every
 “thing looks as though immersion might be
 “the mode, and as for sprinkling, there is,
 “to say the least, nothing that looks like it.”

An assertion of this nature ought to have
 been substantially and clearly proved, but
 you have exhibited no argument or proof,
 from which this pretended inference can
 fairly be drawn.

The question between us, is not, which
 of these two modes, whether sprinkling, or
 immersion, be the only right mode of bap-
 tizing. We admit that immersion is Bap-
 tism, and we believe that Sprinkling is also
 Baptism; but you pretend that immersion
 is the only valid mode, and “that sprink-
 ling does not even look like Baptism.” In
 this, Sir, we differ in opinion, and the dif-
 ference ought to have been candidly and
 plainly represented.

Your criticism on the Greek word *baptizo*,
 &c. and other arguments in support of im-
 mersion, as being the only acceptable mode,
 I will attend to hereafter, if God permit;

but propose, in the first place, to consider the Subjects of Baptism, as this method is most agreeable to my manner of thinking and writing.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R II.

SIR,

THE passage of sacred Scripture, you have chosen for your Text, you very justly style the Commission which our Saviour gave to his Apostles. This commission was evidently given them to be the Warrant and rule of their official duty and conduct. In order to understand fully and correctly any ancient Rule briefly expressed, it is of great importance, and often necessary, to be acquainted with the history of the nation and times, in which, and for which, the rule was primarily given. Many things, concerning which the people were then well informed, and to which they were habitually accustomed, are frequently taken for granted and not explicitly mentioned and enjoined in the Rule.

The Commission, which our Saviour gave his Apostles, is extremely concise and comprehensive. Their official duties are com-

prized in very few words. Some have doubted, whether the command to *teach* (or make disciples of) *all nations*, (as the original word signifies) extended to infants, or have supposed that it had reference only to adult persons.

In order to remove doubts and mistakes of any kind, relative to this question, it would be proper for us to inform ourselves as to the common custom of those times, and if possible, ascertain what was the practice of the Jews with respect to Baptism, in our Saviour's day; and also how the Apostles and primitive Ministers of the Gospel understood and executed their commission.

If the Saviour, instead of directing his Apostles to baptize, had directed them to make Disciples of all Nations, *circumcising* them &c. I presume every one would suppose that he meant to enjoin infant circumcision. The cases are similar; for infant Baptism was probably as common among the Gentile Profelytes, as infant circumcision.

Dr. Wall, who published in London the third edition of his history of infant Baptism, in 1720, has always been esteemed by the best judges, a very learned, judicious, and impartial historian; and in his introduction, first volume, he has abundantly proved from good authorities, that, whenever the Gentiles became Profelytes to the Jewish Religion, their infant children were bapti-

zed. "This," he says, "was their constant practice from the time of Moses until our Saviour's time, and from that period to the present day." We need not at present show, on what scripture this practice was founded. It is sufficient for our purpose, that the practice did obtain, and that it was never condemned, or disapproved by Christ.

We are sometimes asked, Is there any command to baptize infants? The question, in my apprehension, is not properly put: it ought to be enquired, is there any command not to baptize infants? For an established and approved practice, is equivalent to a command, until that practice be prohibited.

It was expected that, when the Messiah should come, and when the Elias his forerunner should appear, these great Prophets would baptize, not only Gentile Profelytes, but Jews. Accordingly, when John was administering the ordinance of Baptism in the land of Judea, "The Jews sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou? And when he confessed I am not the Christ; what then, art thou Elias? he answered no." They had reference to the very identical Elias, or Elijah, who had been translated: he therefore answered no. "Why then, said they, baptizest thou?" They did not expect that their own Nation would be

baptized until the Elias or Messiah came. But as we have observed, they were in the constant habit of baptizing Gentile Profelytes, and there was no objection to this practice.

“Whenever Gentiles were profelyted to the belief of the Jewish Religion, they were initiated by circumcision, the offering of sacrifices, and baptism. They were all baptized, males and females, adults and infants.”

The rites of circumcision and sacrifices are annulled; but Baptism is continued, being less grievous and expensive, and suitable to both sexes, and more congenial to the milder dispensation of the gospel.

The Israelites, men, women and children, were all *baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.* The Gentile profelytes were also baptized, men, women and children, in the ordinary mode; and as the ordinance of Baptism has not been laid aside, but continued, and without mention of any alteration as to the subjects, it is therefore of course still to be administered to Believers and to their Children: That is, to all such as shall be profelyted to the Christian Religion, whether Jews or Gentiles, together with their infant Children.

A belief in revelation always was, and still is required, in order to the Baptism of Adults; but it is no more necessary in or-

der to the Baptism of Infants, under the Gospel of Christ, than it was under the Law of Moses.

I am ready to acknowledge, that, if a Baptist Minister were to be sent forth by a Missionary Society of the Baptist Denomination, to preach and administer the ordinances of the Gospel in a remote country, it would be unnecessary to forbid him to baptize the Infants of Believers. The prohibition would be implied, and a thing of course.

So on the other hand, if a Congregational Minister were to be sent forth by the Congregational Missionary Society, now established in the State of Massachusetts, to preach the Gospel and administer its ordinances in our frontier settlements, it would be equally unnecessary to enjoin the Baptism of Infants; for this would be implied in the Commission, and expected as a thing of course.

The Apostles previously to our Saviour's crucifixion, appear to have baptized persons without any particular orders or directions. Their practice, in this respect, was undoubtedly founded on the approved example of John and custom of those times. And with equal propriety, and by the same authority, when their commission was enlarged, they might baptize the Infants of Believers, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Our Saviour, during his publick ministration, repeatedly sent forth his Disciples to preach the Gospel to the Jews. In these instances, he restricted them to the “*lost sheep of the house of Israel, and expressly forbid their going into the way of the Gentiles, or cities of the Samaritans.*” Their instructions and orders were very particular and explicit in many respects; but there was not one word said to them about Baptism, and yet they undoubtedly did baptize vast numbers. We are told, that “*they made and baptized more Disciples than John.*” Their practice, in this respect, was authorized by established precedents, and approved custom of the country.

After the resurrection of Christ, the wall of separation and distinction between Jews and Gentiles, was removed and the commission of the Apostles accordingly enlarged. They were now directed to *make Disciples of all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* And as it had ever been the custom to include children with their parents in all covenant transactions, and as the children of believing profelytes had always been baptized, the practice of baptizing infants and young children of Believers, would be continued as a thing of course, unless prohibited; and certainly there is no such prohibition.

Their commission was worded in the most general terms. It comprehended *all nations*—Believers and their children of every nation, Jews and Gentiles.

I do not, Sir, consider the custom of baptizing the Gentile profelytes, as being the main argument in favour of infant Baptism, under the Gospel dispensation. But as this ancient practice has been well authenticated by Dr. Wall and other historians, it certainly merits our impartial consideration.

Dr. Prideaux, in his connection of the history of the old and new Testament, part 2d, book 5, page 436, observes, “ That
 “ the Jews, in our Saviour’s time, were very
 “ sedulous to profelyte the Gentiles to their
 “ religion ; and when thus profelyted, they
 “ were initiated by Baptism, Sacrifice and
 “ Circumcision ; and then admitted to all
 “ the rites and privileges of the natural
 “ Jews.”

The ordinance of Baptism, it seems, had been omitted among the Jews, from the days of Moses till the time of Christ, but was then re-established and administered to them, as well as to the Gentiles. To this the Saviour undoubtedly alluded, when he said to Nicodemus, “ *Except a man (any one)
 “ be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot
 “ enter into the Kingdom of God.*” The Jew-

ish Ruler, instead of coming secretly *by night*, must come by day, and be baptized.

It is certain that no person can belong to the invisible Kingdom of God, *unless born of the Spirit*, that is, *renewed by the Holy Ghost*; and it is equally certain that no one can regularly belong to the visible Kingdom of God, *unless born of Water*, that is, baptized. And yet our Saviour said, "*Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God.*" Now, if *his Kingdom*, whether visible or invisible, does consist of *little children, of infants*, they certainly have a right to the external sign and token of membership, which is Baptism, the *washing of regeneration*.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R III.

SIR,

HAVING, in the preceding Letter, attempted to elucidate the question under consideration, by pointing out the way and method in which the Gentile profelytes were publicly initiated into the Jewish religion and covenant, I am now prepared to consider your objections and arguments against the practice of infant Baptism. I

hope, Sir, you will not be offended, if I should discover and correct some mistakes and sophistry, in your mode of reasoning and manner of treating the subject.

We are agreed that the word *matheteufate*, which is translated *teach*, means (*disciple*) all nations. The voluntary consent of adult persons is necessary, in order to their becoming the Disciples of Christ. A profession of faith is required of them in order to Baptism. It is therefore requisite, that they should be previously taught and instructed.

Faith and repentance were equally necessary under the Law of Moses, in order to the circumcision of adult Jews, and in order to the circumcision and Baptism of the adult Gentiles, but not required of their infant children.

In your sixth Discourse, you make this supposition, “ Suppose I, instrumentally, “ disciple the Father of a Christless Family, “ do I, as a necessary consequence, make “ Christians of all his house? Do I make “ visible disciples of all his family? his “ wife, his servants, his children?”

I, Sir, will venture to answer these questions in the negative, and am not a little surprized to find, that you should have been for so long a time in favour of the affirmative side

Who, excepting yourself, in this enlightened country, ever supposed, that the faith

of the husband entitled his wife, or that the faith of the father entitled his adult children and servants, to Baptism? It is certainly unnecessary to confute opinions which every body among us, at present, disavows.

You proceed, fourthly, to state a number of frightful consequences “as following upon supposition the subjects of Baptism are to be determined from the subjects of circumcision. That every man who is converted to the Christian religion must be baptized, and all his household, although he may have three hundred and seventeen soldiers, born in his own house, together with their wives and children, and all other servants. A thousand infidels are to be baptized, because their master is christianized. All these are to be considered and treated as Church Members, and then ask, could such a communion be called the communion of saints?—One great and good man, with hundreds of unconverted servants.”

I very much wonder, Sir, that your fruitful imagination did not add to this formidable list, one more “great and good man,” with his seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, and numerous retinue of troops and attendants.

The case you have stated is not supposable under the dispensation of the

Gospel. The covenant of grace and church of Christ have been substantially the same in all ages; but the privileges and duties of its members have been constantly varying, as their circumstances altered. Who ever supposed that the "subjects of Baptism," without any allowance for the difference of circumstances under the Gospel "were to be determined by the subjects of circumcision under the law?" In the patriarchal age, and under the Mosaic dispensation, polygamy and slavery were in some sense tolerated. "*Moses for the hardness of their hearts suffered them. At the times of this ignorance God winked, but now commands all men every where to repent.*"

The Gospel does not authorize the practice of holding slaves, or of having a plurality of wives; but it allows *every man to have his own wife, and every woman her own husband*; and believing parents, to devote themselves and their infant children to God, in Baptism. "*They who believe are blessed with faithful Abraham. Believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, are counted for his seed, and the promise is made to them and their children.*"

You tell us "that the promises were made to Abraham and his seed while in *uncircumcision.*" This is true; "and that the covenant which was confirmed of God to

“ *him in Christ*, was about twenty four years
 “ before the covenant of circumcision.”

We all know that *Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness*. The promise or covenant was made before he was circumcised ; but still circumcision was afterward affixed as an external visible token of this gracious covenant, and for other purposes.

We are expressly told in the fourth chapter of Romans. eleventh verse, “ *That A-*
 “ *braham received the sign of circumcision, the*
 “ *seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he*
 “ *had, yet being uncircumcised ; that he might*
 “ *be the Father of all them that believe.*” Thus,
 the Gospel was preached to Abraham. That is,
 the Gospel covenant, and the seal was af-
 fixed to him and his seed.

It is readily admitted that the Abrahamic covenant was complicated with the ceremonial law. This ceremonial or Sinai law, which was not made until the Israelites left Egypt, has been repealed or superseded by the Gospel ; but the Apostle informs us, in the third chapter to the Galatians, and seventeenth verse, that the “ *Covenant that was*
 “ *confirmed before of God in Christ, the Law*
 “ *which was four hundred and thirty years after,*
 “ *cannot disannul, that it should make the prom-*
 “ *ise of none effect.*”

It is acknowledged with respect to adult persons, that faith was always pre requisite,

in order to the circumcision of themselves and of their children; but the Jews were ready to imagine that they had a natural and absolute right and title to the inheritance and blessing of their Father Abraham. It was this mistake which our Saviour and his Apostles endeavoured to correct.

Saint Paul observes, "*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not to seeds as of many;*" meaning all the natural descendants of Abraham, "*but as of one, and to thy Seed which is Christ.*" In this place, Christ is mentioned collectively, as being the head and representative of Christians, or Believers; for *Believers*, whether Jews or Gentiles, *are counted for his Seed.* Accordingly, the same Apostle adds, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles.*"

As believing Isaac and Jacob inherited the blessing, which Ishmael and Esau forfeited and lost by unbelief, so the believing Gentiles inherit that blessing of Abraham, which the unbelieving Jews have forfeited and lost. *They are broken off from the olive tree, from the covenant of grace by unbelief, and ye are grafted in and stand by faith.*

The blessing of Abraham is promised to all believing Jews *and to their children, and to those who are afar off*, meaning the Gentiles, when they shall become believers,

and of course to their children, *even to as many as the Lord our God shall call*; that is, to those of every nation, who shall become believers, and of consequence, to their children.

The Abrahamic covenant has several times been renewed, and is therefore sometimes called *a new covenant*, in distinction from its former editions; but it has never been essentially altered.

The Mosaic law was always a different thing. This law, the Apostle tells us, was “not against the promises of God, but *added because of transgressions until Christ should come.*” It was annexed, with all its rites and services, as an appendage, in order to be subservient to the covenant, until the gospel dispensation should commence. Accordingly, when the gospel commenced, this law, which had served as an appendage to the Abrahamic covenant, having become old and useless, ceased; but *the promise* of God, or covenant, was not annulled thereby, or rendered ineffectual. The external token of the covenant, by divine appointment, was altered from circumcision to Baptism; but we have no account of any alteration as to the subjects.

A covenant implies mutual engagements and promises, on some condition, expressed or understood, between two or more parties. So far as a covenant is absolute it

partakes the nature of a promise ; and so far as a promise is conditional, it partakes the nature of a covenant.

The promise, which God made to Abraham and his seed, and the covenant established between him and them, were one and the same thing, in substance.

It is not essential to the nature of a covenant, that there should be any external seal or token ; accordingly, Abraham was in covenant with God several years before the external seal was appointed.

When an external seal or token is appointed, it is not essential to the nature of a covenant, that the token should be extended to all the members ; accordingly, circumcision, or the external token of the Abrahamic covenant, was, by divine appointment, affixed to the males only ; but the females were as really included, after the token was affixed to the males, as Abraham was included, before the token was appointed.

The sign is often put for the thing signified ; accordingly, we find that circumcision is sometimes called the token of the covenant, and sometimes the covenant itself.

In the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, God says, “ *I will make a covenant between me and thee : and I will establish my covenant between me and thee ; and thy seed after thee ; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after*

“*thee. This is my covenant which ye shall*
 “*keep between me and you, and thy seed after*
 “*thee. Every man child among you shall be*
 “*circumcised; and it shall be a token of the*
 “*covenant between me and you.*”

The children of Abraham were certainly included with him in the covenant. It is impossible that words should be more explicit. Thus Moses, and Joshua, and the Prophets, understood this covenant in their day, and practised accordingly; as it appears from Deut. xxix, 10, “*Ye stand this day*
 “*before the Lord—all the men of Israel; your*
 “*little ones, and your wives, that thou shouldst*
 “*enter into covenant, that he may be unto thee*
 “*a God, as he hath sworn to Abraham.*” Ezekiel xvi—7, “*I entered into covenant with*
 “*thee, and thou becamest mine.*” And in the 20th verse, he complains thus, “*Thou hast*
 “*taken thy sons and thy daughters, which thou*
 “*hast born unto me, and these thou hast sacri-*
 “*ficed. Thou hast slain my children.*”

It is readily granted that the Abrahamic covenant included temporal blessings. In this respect, the Israelites once enjoyed peculiar advantages; but they were principally distinguished by religious and spiritual privileges.

Thus it is under the Gospel. *Godliness has the promise of the life which now is, and especially of that which is to come.*

Circumcision was principally a seal of spiritual blessings, and so is Baptism. The ceremonies are different, but the ends proposed are similar. They both signify the necessity of inward renovation and sanctification by the word and spirit of God, and of justification by the blood of Christ.

These different rites were constituted the external tokens of initiation into the covenant—a badge of distinction, and an obligation to obey God's requirements.

Baptism has evidently superceded circumcision, and rendered it unnecessary. Thus the Apostle reasoned in his Epistle to the Colossians, when he found the Jewish converts endeavouring to enforce circumcision on the believing Gentiles, with an intention to make use of it as a plea for incorporating with christianity the whole ceremonial law, as being essential to justification and salvation.

He saw their object and refused to comply. Although he had, for prudential reasons, *circumcised Timothy*, he would not consent to *circumcise Titus*; but informed them, that Baptism was *the christian circumcision*, and that being already baptized they were of course circumcised to all intents and purposes. “*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; for ye are complete in him, in whom ye are*

*“circumcised with the circumcision of Christ,
“being buried with him in Baptism.” &c.*

The seal is changed, but the covenant is essentially the same. Saint Peter, when addressing the Jews, says, *“Ye are the children
“of the prophets, and of the covenant, which
“God made with our fathers, saying unto A-
“braham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds
“of the earth be blessed; or, in thee, and in
“thy seed, shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

The blessing here promised is not merely a personal, but a family blessing; and as believers are children of the promise, the blessing extends to their natural seed, in the same sense, that it extended to the natural seed of faithful Abraham. As the children of Abraham had a right to circumcision, the former appointed seal, so the infant children of christian parents have now a right to Baptism, the present appointed seal of the same covenant.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R I V .

SIR,

IN the former Letter, I endeavoured to show, that the covenant made with Abraham, of which circumcision was the

seal, was properly the covenant of grace. The alterations which have taken place under the New-Testament dispensation, are merely circumstantial. The covenant remains substantially the same; but it is of the greatest importance, to distinguish correctly, between its outward administration in Christ's visible kingdom, and its inward efficacy and sanctifying effects, upon the hearts and lives of its members. It is equally necessary to apprehend rightly the nature and import of the promise, or blessing promised, in this gracious covenant. Misapprehensions, in these particulars, have already occasioned a strange confusion of ideas, and difficulties which are almost insuperable.

“*I will be a God to thee and thy seed.*” There is nothing in this promise, which implies absolute and unconditional salvation. The blessing promised is not unsuitable to the age and capacity of children. The promise might therefore be made to them, with as much propriety as to their believing parents. “*I will be a God to thee and to thy seed.*” That is, I will be and do, in the way of mercy and grace, all that, to and for thee and thy seed, which a Being of infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, can be and do, consistently with my character as moral Governor of the moral world. The saving benefit of those bles-

sings here promised and bestowed, depends ultimately upon their being rightly used and improved.

We have, under the covenant of grace, various talents and privileges, intrusted to our care and management ; and we are commanded to occupy and improve these blessings and privileges, until our Lord come and reckon with us. If we suitably and profitably use and improve these blessings, we shall be accepted and rewarded accordingly ; but if we neglect and abuse them, we shall be justly punished for our negligence and wickedness.

It has always been God's method, in all his covenant dealings and transactions, to include children with their parents. Thus he conducted in the covenant made with our first parents ; in the covenant made with Noah ; in the covenant made with Abraham, and in the several renewals of this covenant, under the various subsequent dispensations.

We very often read of God's blessing families, houses, and households. The Israelites were blessed on the account of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other pious ancestors ; and the Apostle tells us that they are still *beloved for their Father's sake*. “ The Psalmist says, *The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's chil-*

“ *dren, to such as keep his covenant, and re-
“ member his commandments to do them.*”

When Zaccheus became a true believer and penitent, Christ said to him, “ *This day,
“ is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as
“ he also is the son of Abraham.*” When the jailer enquired what he should do to be saved, Peter replied, “ *Believe on the Lord
“ Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and
“ thy house.*”

In the allegory of the Olive Tree, which represents the church and covenant of God, *some of the natural branches, meaning the unbelieving Jews, were broktn off*; but others remained, and the believing Gentiles, who originally belonged to *the wild Olive, were grafted in among them and partook of its fatness.* Now, says the Apostle, *if the root* (he evidently meant the ancient Patriarch) *be holy, so are the branches, whether natural or ingrafted.*

The holiness here referred to, is certainly a federal or covenant holiness, which is as applicable to children as to their parents. Thus, “ *The blessing of Abraham, that salva-
“ tion which was of the Jews, is come upon the
“ Gentiles. They who are of faith are the chil-
“ dren of Abraham, and blessed with faithful
“ Abraham.*” They are his adopted children; and if children, then heirs to all the blessings and privileges of the covenant.

They are the seed of the blessed, and their offspring with them.

The doctrine of including children with their parents in the covenant, is perfectly natural and congenial to our own proper sentiment and feelings. If you should meet with the child of a near relation and dear friend, would not your affection and regard for the parent, immediately expand and embrace his child? Would you not notice it with particular attention, and treat it with peculiar kindness, for the sake, and on the account of its beloved parent? Such benevolence would be natural and right, and undoubtedly correspondent to the nature of that Being from whom it was derived.

Believers are the children of God, as well as of Abraham. They are his friends and favourites; and his friendship for them extends and embraces their natural children; and according to his promise, he blesses them with his richest mercies, temporal and spiritual; but, as we have observed, the saving benefit of these blessings and privileges, under Providence, depends upon their own right use and improvement.

It does not appear from precept, or example, or fair implication, that the covenant made with Abraham and his posterity, has ever been repealed or set aside; or that any alterations have taken place, excepting such as are merely circumstantial.

The children of parents in the christian church, are as capable of being members of the covenant, and of having the requisite qualifications, and things signified by Baptism, as the infants of Abraham and his posterity were, of being included in the covenant made with them.

The Abrahamic covenant, or covenant of circumcision, as it is sometimes called, we are expressly told, was made with the *house of Israel*. The renewals of this covenant, or the *new covenant*, as it is sometimes called, on account of greater privileges, we are expressly told, is made with the *house of Israel*. The covenant and subjects thereof, making suitable allowance for the difference of circumstances, are the same under the new as under the old Testament. Baptism is the *christian circumcision*; and this appointed seal of the covenant, it appears highly probable, was affixed by the Apostles and primitive ministers of Christ, to the children of believing parents. There is nothing contrary to this opinion asserted or intimated in the New Testament.

Neither women, nor infants are particularly mentioned, in the account we have of Baptism, during the ministration of John and of our Saviour; but mere silence, in this case, is no proof that they were not baptized. When our Saviour had ascended, Peter, at the feast of Pentecost, exhorted

his hearers to faith and repentance, saying, "*The promise is to you and your children;*" and we are told "*That they who gladly received his word, were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them, about three thousand souls.*" It is not likely, that those persons who lived at a distance, brought their children with them on this occasion; but the citizens of Jerusalem who believed, might devote their infant children with themselves, to God in Baptism. Those adult persons who "*received the word gladly were baptized;*" and it is further observed, "*that three thousand souls were added unto them.*" It is not said three thousand men and women, but *three thousand souls*, an expression of the most indefinite nature, and which, according to its common usage in scripture, includes persons of both sexes and of every age.

We are in other places informed concerning the Baptism of whole households, when the parent became a believer. Thus "*Lydia and her household were baptized;—Stephanas and his household were baptized;—the jailer and all his, were baptized, straightway.*"

The inspired writers have not told us whether these children were males or females. They have not mentioned the age and name of each child; but the account is as particular as we could expect in a

narrative of facts, so extremely concise as the history of the Acts of the Apostles.

It is possible that some of these children were old enough to act for themselves; but it appears to me, much more probable, that some, if not all of them, were so young as to have been baptized on the account of their parents. The meaning seems to be so plain and obvious, as not to need any comment; especially when we consider that infant children have never been precluded from Baptism, the present appointed token; and that under former dispensations, they always were admitted with their parents into covenant with God.

Another very conclusive argument in favour of infant Baptism, we have recorded in the first epistle to the Corinthians vii. 14. It seems that some persons who had been converted to the christian religion, were connected with unbelieving yoke-fellows, and that the lawfulness of their cohabiting with them was doubted. They began to imagine that a separation was necessary, lest the offspring of such marriages should be deemed impure, and unfit to be taken into covenant with God.

Under the law of Moses, the Israelites were forbidden to marry with unprofelyted Gentiles; and in the days of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, they were expressly required to put away *those strange wives*, whom they had il-

licitly married, *together with their children.* But the case, we find, is different under the Gospel. The Gentiles are now to be considered as *cleansed*, and no longer to be “*called common and unclean.*”

The danger of being corrupted by an unbelieving partner, is not so great as it was under the former dispensation. There is a fair prospect that the *believing husband* will be instrumental in *saving his wife*; and that the *believing wife* will be instrumental in *saving her husband*: and further, the Apostle tells us, “*That the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.*”

Among the Israelites, many things and persons were considered as legally unclean, and visibly unholy; and on this account, were interdicted. Accordingly, the Israelites were prohibited the use of various kinds of food. They were not allowed to associate with the unprofelyted Gentiles, in their religious assemblies, or intermix with them in marriages; and children born of such parents, were considered as unclean and unholy, and as not having a right to covenant privileges.

Again: those persons and things, which were consecrated and set apart for sacred and religious uses, are styled *clean and holy*. Thus the Israelites are denominated a *holy people*, and their *first born holy to the Lord*.

Their children were also denominated *holy*, as being the branches of a *holy root*—the offspring of God's covenant people; and of consequence, had a right to the appointed token. And thus it is under the Gospel: the children of believers, by divine appointment, are to be considered and treated as federally holy, and consequently as being the proper subjects of Baptism.

Indeed the privileges of children, in this respect, are now much greater than they were under former dispensations; for on supposition the father or mother should happen to be an unbeliever, this circumstance is not allowed to infringe their claim. The character of children is denominated from the *believing parent*; and their right to Baptism is the same that it would have been, if both parents were believers. For the Apostle says, "*The unbelieving husband is sanctified by*" (or to, as it might have been rendered) *the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by (or to) the believing husband, else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.*"

Persons and things are said to be *sanctified*, when rendered subservient to the end proposed. The Sabbath is said to be *sanctified* by God, because set apart and blessed by him for holy purposes. The food we eat is *sanctified*, when blessed to the nourishment of our bodies. Afflictions are *sanctified*, when blessed to our religious and moral improvement. Accordingly, the unbelieving hus-

band or wife, is *sanctified* to the believing companion. The connection is approved and blessed to the ends proposed, and especially as it respects their posterity.

Persons and things are sometimes represented as *sanctified*, by means of their relation to, and connexion with, other things, which are termed holy. *The gold* is spoken of by our Saviour, as *sanctified by the Temple*, with which it was connected, and for which it was intended as ornaments or utensils. *The gift* is mentioned, as *sanctified by the altar*, with which it was connected, and upon which it was offered; and thus the unbelieving husband or wife, being married to a believer, is become *one flesh*, and, by means of this union, may be considered as *sanctified*, or blessed by God to the use and benefit of the believing partner: "*else were your children unclean*;" that is, in the same sense, disqualified for Baptism, as if both their parents were unbelievers or heathens; "*but now are they holy*;" that is, qualified, as really for a regular admission into Christ's visible covenant or kingdom, as if both their parents had been professed believers.

The children here spoken of, are not adult persons, but infants or minors; and this reputed holiness, which entitles them to covenant privileges, and in particular to Baptism, the visible token of initiation, is evidently different in its signification from the sanctification of the unbelieving husband or wife.

The adult unbeliever may be induced to believe the Gospel, or may be inherently and savingly *sanctified* by means of the believing consort, and of course have an undoubted personal right to Baptism, but cannot derive this right from the faith of any other person.

But we find, in the scripture, that all creatures, relations, and enjoyments, are said to be *sanctified* to believers. “*To the pure,*” says the Apostle, “*all things are pure. Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving : for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*” And thus the unbelieving husband or wife is *sanctified* to the lawful use of the believer, so far as concerns their cohabitation, their conjugal society, and the federal holiness of their posterity.

We do not pretend that the inward quality of real holiness can be transferred from parents to children; but external privileges, covenant privileges, may be and have been transmitted: the children of believers are therefore denominated holy, as having a visible right to these covenant blessings.

You have not told us, Sir, how you understand the passage of scripture we have been considering. I will therefore just notice the explanation as given by Dr. Gill and other Baptist writers. They tell us that the “Apostle means a matrimonial holiness. That the unbelieving husband is married or espoused

to the wife, and the unbelieving wife married to the husband: else were your children bastards, but now are they legitimate."

This construction appears to be far-fetched, very unnatural, and even palpably absurd. The inspired writers were never in the habit of expressing the idea of being married, by the word sanctified; nor the idea of *bastardy*, by the word *unclean*; nor the idea of *legitimacy*, by the word *holy*.

The Corinthian converts knew, as well as Saint Paul could tell them, that they were married, and that they had transgressed no law by thus marrying. They never doubted the legality of their marriage, or the legitimacy of their children. How very unreasonable then, to suppose that the Apostle meant to inform them that they were married, and that their children were not bastards, but legitimate; and in language too, entirely foreign to the subject?

In the days of primitive christianity, it frequently happened that one of the partners in marriage, the husband or the wife, embraced the christian religion, while the other remained in a state of infidelity; and when we consider that the law of Moses forbade the Israelites to marry with the unprofelyted Gentiles, and that in some instances, in which marriage had taken place, they were actually required to put away their heathen wives and children, it might very naturally become a question among the Gentile converts, whe-

ther the matrimonial connexion, between a believer and unbeliever, should be continued or dissolved ; and how their children, in such cases, would be viewed and treated. The Apostle's answer to these questions, as we have explained it, is pertinent and perfectly satisfactory. He has solved their doubts in a masterly and unanswerable manner.

On the other hand, how weak and insignificant is the apostle's reasoning, according to Dr. Gill and others? " Else were your children bastards, but now are they legitimate." This is mentioned as an inference; and what are the premises? " The unbelieving husband or wife is married to the believer, otherwise your children would have been bastards but now are they legitimate." It is certainly true that children begotten and born of unmarried parents, are bastards; and it is certainly true that children begotten and born of married parents, are legitimate; it is also equally certain, that one and one are two, and that two and two are four; but who ever disputed these truths? and what inspired prophet or apostle ever seriously undertook to prove them? If the dispute had been concerning the marriage of these persons, or the legitimacy of their children, they would undoubtedly have applied to the office of the town clerk, or to the public records, for a solution of the question; and not to a christian caluist, who resided in the remote city of Philippi.

It is a circumstance worthy our particular notice that the Apostle had repeatedly styled these persons, husband and wife; and certainly no man can be a husband, unless he have a wife, or woman who is married to him; and no woman can be a wife, unless she have a husband, or man who is married to her.

It seems St. Paul had taken it for granted, and had repeatedly and explicitly acknowledged that they were married; and would he, after all this, be so tautological, as to say again, that the unbelieving husband is married to the wife, and the unbelieving wife is married to the husband? And would he, instead of using the common word *married*, which every body understood, have substituted the word *sanctified*, which was never before or since, used in this sense by an inspired writer?

But, we are told that “marriage or espousal, is sometimes expressed in the Jewish writings, by a word in their language, which signifies to sanctify.” And if true, what is it to the purpose? The Apostle was not writing to the Jews, in their language, but to the Greeks, and in the Greek language; and you will again permit me to observe, that this is a novel sense, in which the Hebrew word *Kadash*, and the Greek word *agiazō*, which signify to sanctify, were never used in the sacred scriptures.” As to the Greek word *Agios*, which is here

translated holy, I believe no person has pretended, that any author, unless on the present occasion, ever used it to signify legitimate. The construction is not even plausible. Our translation is undoubtedly correct. The question was not respecting the legitimacy of their children, but concerning their right to Baptism; which the Apostle has answered affirmatively.

If the unbeliever should be disposed to forsake the believing consort, let him or her depart. The believer, in this case, is not permitted to renounce his religion, in order to prevent a separation. But if the unbeliever be desirous of remaining with his or her believing companion, the believer is not allowed to separate. Those reasons, which existed under the Mosaic dispensation, for separating in such cases, do not exist under the Gospel of Christ, either with respect to the believing parent or the children.

The danger of being corrupted by the unbeliever—of being seduced to a state of unbelief and idolatry, is less than it was; while the probability is much greater, of reclaiming the unbeliever, and of training up *the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. Perhaps *O man, thou mayest save thy wife*; or perhaps *O woman, thou mayest save thy husband*.

The marriage is approved and confirmed; and as those meats which were anciently prohibited as unclean, are now said to be

cleansed and sanctified; so the *unbelieving husband or wife is sanctified by* or to the use of the believer. The children are therefore not to be considered *unclean*, or unfit for dedication to God, as would have been the case under the Mosaic dispensation, but as *holy*; that is, in the same sense *holy*, or visibly qualified for the appointed token of the covenant, as if both the parents had been Israelites under the law of Moses, or both believers under the Gospel of Christ.

This argument, founded on the reasoning of St. Paul, appears to be conclusive in favour of infant Baptism. Its force can never be evaded or surmounted. I wish, dear Sir, that you would review and consider it, with attention and impartiality.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R V.

SIR,

I HAVE re-assumed my pen, in order to state other arguments in favour of infant Baptism. It is a fact well known, that our Saviour and his Apostles, practised blessing authoritatively those persons who were qualified to receive the blessing. One form of pronouncing this blessing was in the following words; "*Peace be to, or with you, from*

God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, &c." In conformity to this practice our Saviour repeatedly blessed his disciples. "*Peace be with you—my peace I give unto you—my peace I leave with you, &c.*"

We are not told in what form of words, the *Prince of Peace* blessed those infant children, who were presented to him by their believing parents, for the purpose of receiving his blessing; but, when he sent forth his disciples to preach the Gospel, St. Matthew informs us, that he expressly ordered them, upon entering "*a house, to salute it; and if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.*" Saint Luke has explained to us, what this *worthiness* of the *house* is, which intitles the *household* to the blessing. "*If the Son of Peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall return to you again.*" Observe the emphatical words.—*If the Son of Peace be there*; if the *parent* or *head* of the family be a believer, or friend to me and my doctrine, pronounce the apostolical benediction. It is observable that our Saviour uses the word *Son*, in the singular number, as if he meant to preclude all cavil, and all uncertainty as to his meaning. *If the Son of Peace be there.* If but *one* of the parents be a believer, deliver your message. Bless not only the believing *parent*, but the *children*—bless the *house* in my name. And if children are intitled to the covenant blessing of Abraham,

on account of their believing parent, they certainly have a right to the visible initiating token of the covenant.

It is admitted that our Saviour did not baptize those children, who were brought to him for a blessing. He never administered the ordinance of Baptism, on any occasion, to any person, adult or infant; but his Apostles were in the constant practice of baptizing; and as has been already shown, we have abundant reason to think that they baptized, as well as blessed, the households of believers; but if they did not baptize, they certainly blessed them, as having a right to the family or covenant blessing of faithful Abraham; and on this the argument in favour of infant Baptism depends.

The ark was a remarkable type of the covenant of grace, and especially as it proved the means of temporal salvation not only to Noah, but to his family. The Apostle tells us, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, xi. 7, *“that Noah, by faith, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”* Noah believed God, and was influenced by his faith to provide an ark, into which, by divine appointment, his household was admitted; and by means of which, his family, his children, as well as himself, were saved alive; when all mankind besides, were overwhelmed and destroyed by the universal deluge.

Alluding to this wonderful preservation of Noah's family, and on the account of his faith, Saint Peter, in his first Epistle, 111, 20, 21, speaking of the *ark*, says, "*Wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*" Both the Apostles are very particular, in mentioning not only the preservation of Noah, but of his household, and by means of the ark which floated upon the water. "*In like figure whereunto Baptism doth also now save us;*" and truly the likenels of the figure is very remarkable; for as Noah by faith prepared an ark, into which his household was admitted with himself and saved; so the children, the household of believers, are visibly and regularly initiated with their parents, by Baptism, into the covenant of grace.

This religious transaction must be performed in faith, and in a sincere conscientious manner. It is not, as the Apostle observes, *the putting away the filth of the flesh*; that is, the mere external ceremony of Baptism, which saves us, *but the answer of a good conscience toward God.*

Some have supposed that this last clause invalidates the argument with reference to infant Baptism; but it is a mistake. The argument instead of being weakened, is strengthened and confirmed; for the likenels of the figure, which the Apostle expressly mentioned, and which we are not allowed to overlook, appears chiefly, if not wholly, in the ordinance of Baptism, as it respects

infants. It was on the account of Noah's faith and righteousness, that his family was spared, when all others were destroyed, as we find recorded in the sixth and seventh chapters of Genesis. *And the Lord said unto Noah, come thou, and all thy house, into the ark; and with thee, will I establish my covenant, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.* Noah sincerely obeyed the divine command. He acted agreeably to the dictates of a good conscience. Under the influence of faith he built the ark—he entered the ark, and introduced his household; and thus the believing parent acts uprightly and conscientiously in devoting himself and children to God in Baptism.

No person can perform acceptably any duty or service, either for himself or for another, unless influenced by faith and a good conscience.

It evidently appears that our salvation by Baptism was typified by the remarkable preservation of Noah's family by means of water; and especially when we consider that the children of believers are visibly admitted with their parents, by this discriminating token, into the gospel covenant, as the children of Noah were included with their father in the covenant God made with him, and on his account and for his sake, were admitted into the ark.

Another argument in favour of infant Baptism, we find in the first Epistle to the

Corinthians, x, 2. In which place the Apostle, speaking of the Israelites who left Egypt, says, "*They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*" We are often told by the Baptist, that there is no example in sacred scripture, in favour of infant Baptism. This declaration is incorrect. Saint Paul tells us, that "*they were all baptized, unto or into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea;*" or *by the cloud and by the sea*, as the original words might with great propriety have been translated. Here then was infant Baptism; not only men and women were baptized, but children, sucking children, in the arms of their parents. It is true this happened in the time of Moses; but Saint Paul quotes the passage and applies it expressly to the Christian Baptism. The Baptists, themselves, acknowledge it alludes to the Christian Baptism. The argument is therefore as conclusive in favour of infant Baptism, as if the event had taken place in the days of the Apostles.

The Jewish writers particularly mention, that the "Israelites were baptized in the wilderness and admitted into covenant with God before the law was given;" and accordingly, as we have observed, the Gentiles when profelyted to their religion, were initiated by Baptism. All the males were circumcised, and all the males and females, adults and infants, were baptized; and it seems from what the Jews said to John, that they actually expected the ordinance of Bap-

tism would be again administered to the people of their own nation, whenever the Messiah, or the Elias his forerunner, should appear. They undoubtedly expected that infants as well as adult persons would then be baptized, agreeably to what had happened to them in the wilderness, and in conformity to their common practice, as it respected the Gentile proselytes. Accordingly, Saint Paul, in a very emphatical manner, and with express reference to the Christian Baptism, mentions that they were *all baptized*.

The word *all*, certainly comprehends persons of both sexes, and of every age, infants and adults; and it is very remarkable, how frequently and how emphatically he mentions this universal term. The word *all* is repeated no less than six times, as if with design to prevent all possibility of being misunderstood. “They *all* did eat of the same
 “ spiritual meat.—They *all* did drink of the
 “ same spiritual drink.—They *all* were un-
 “ der the cloud.—They *all* passed through
 “ the sea; and were *all*” (that is males and
 “ females, adults and infants) “baptized unto
 Moses in the cloud and in the sea.—*All* these
 things happened to them for ensamples and
 are written for our admonition,” says the
 Apostle. And they plainly teach us this important truth, that as all the Israelites, together with their infant children, were baptized into Moses, so all believers, together with their

infant children, are to be baptized into Christ.

Moses was a type of Christ—his Baptism in the wilderness, was typical of the Christian Baptism. The Israelites, who descended from Abraham, being God's covenant people, were typical of believers, *who are now counted for his seed*; and as all the congregation of the Israelites, including adult parents and their infant children, were baptized into Moses, so all adult believers, together with their infant children, are to be baptized into Christ under the Gospel institution. This appears to be the Apostle's argument, and his reasoning is to the purpose.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER VI.

SIR,

I AM not unmindful that the Baptist consider the Abrahamic covenant, of which circumcision was the token, or the covenant of circumcision, as it is sometimes called, as being absolutely annulled; and the Gospel covenant, as being a new and distinct covenant. This opinion we have already endeavoured to confute; but as it appears to be very much relied upon by yourself and others, it may perhaps merit a more particular

consideration. Let us then carefully and impartially enquire into the meaning of the Apostle, in the 8th chapter to the Hebrews; in which place, he is expressly treating of this *old* and *new* covenant.

I perceive, Sir, that you have quoted the 13th verse, &c. but have omitted the 8th and 9th verses, without which it is impossible to understand your quotation. The 13th verse is as follows: “ *In that he saith a new covenant he hath made the first old; now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.*” You must be sensible that it is a matter of the greatest importance in the present enquiry, for us to understand rightly the import of this old covenant, and also to ascertain the time when it was made. Is it the same covenant that God established with Abraham, of which circumcision was the appointed token? This is what the Apostle hath nowhere asserted. He has not so much as mentioned the name *Abraham*, or the word *circumcision*, in any part of the chapter, nor even in the subsequent chapter, which relates to the same subject; but seems to have anticipated your interpretation of the text, and to have precluded it in the most effectual manner. He has expressly informed us at what time, and in what place, this old covenant was made. In order, if possible, to prevent misapprehensions of every kind, he has specified the very day, as we find recorded in the 8th and 9th verses; which I most

sincerely wish you would peruse with impartial attention. *“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day, when I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt.”*

You will observe, this old covenant was ratified under the administration of Moses, and at the time when the Israelites left Egypt. How then could it be the covenant of circumcision, which was given to Abraham, more than four hundred years before the commencement of that memorable period? *When, I took them by the hand, says God, to lead them out of the land of Egypt.*

However, in order to make it appear, that circumcision was part of the law of Moses, you further quote the 23d verse of the 7th chapter of John. *“If a man, on the Sabbath day, receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken,”* &c. I wish, Sir, you had also quoted the preceding verse; for the Saviour is very careful to remind us that this covenant was not derived, originally, from Moses, but from the Patriarchs; meaning Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. *“Moses therefore,”* says he *“gave unto you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers.”*

Circumcision was annexed to the law of Moses, and expressly enforced by his authority; or else, as the Apostle intimates, this law was added to the covenant of circumcision

because of transgressions, until Christ should come. The Mosaic law is accordingly superseded; but we are told, that *it cannot disannul the covenant which was before confirmed of God in Christ, and make the promise of no effect.* The Apostle undoubtedly meant the *promise* made to Abraham and his seed, in the covenant of circumcision.

You tell us expressly “that the covenant of circumcision was more than 1700 years ago, decaying, waxing old, and ready to vanish away.” But the Apostle does not denominate *this* the “covenant of circumcision.” He styles *it* the *covenant which God made with the Israelites, in the day when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.* The covenant of circumcision was established more than four hundred years previous to this event. Our Saviour, as we have observed, informs us, that circumcision, although enjoined by Moses as a law-giver and ruler of the people, was not “*from him, but from the fathers.*” It was as early as the days of Abraham; and certainly the *covenant*, of which circumcision was the token, could not be of a later date. The ceremonial law, or Sinai and Horeb covenant, has waxed old, and has ceased; but it has not rendered of *no effect* the much older covenant of circumcision.

You again proceed to observe “that circumcision” (meaning, as I suppose, the covenant of circumcision as you had termed it

in the previous sentence) “ is evidently a
 “ very important part of that law which is
 “ disannulled, for saith Paul to the Galatians,
 “ chapter v, 2—3, if ye be *circumcised* Christ
 “ shall *profit* you *nothing*. For I testify
 “ again to every man that is *circumcised* that
 “ he is a debtor to do the whole law.”

Can you possibly suppose, that Saint Paul, in this place, intended to be understood literally? Did the Apostle imagine, that by circumcising Timothy, he should deprive him of all the benefits of redemption, and thereby oblige him to observe all the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation? No, Sir. How often has he told us that circumcision was a thing of no importance? “ *For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avail-*
 “ *eth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new*
 “ *creature.*” And again, “ *circumcision is*
 “ *nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keep-*
 “ *ing the commandments of God.*”

Circumcision being superseded by Baptism, Saint Paul considered it in the light of the most perfect indifference, both as it respected the Law of Moses, and as it respected justification and salvation by Jesus Christ. Viewing circumcision in this light, he believed it might be with propriety omitted or practised, as prudence or policy should require; accordingly the practice was for some time continued among the Jewish converts, and discontinued among the Gentile converts. But the opinion and practice of St. Paul

being misrepresented, the believing Jews at Jerusalem, were greatly alarmed, as it appears from the Acts of the Apostles, 21st chapter, 20th, 21st and 22d verses, &c.

“Thou seeest brother, how many thousands of
 “the Jews there are which believe; and they
 “are all zealous of the law; and they are in-
 “formed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews,
 “which are among the Gentiles, to forsake
 “Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise
 “their children, neither to walk after the cus-
 “toms. Do therefore this that we say unto
 “thee; we have four men which have a vow
 “on them; take them and purify thyself
 “with them, and be at charges with them,
 “that they may shave their heads, and that
 “all may know that those things whereof they are
 “informed concerning thee are nothing, but that
 “thou thyself, also, walkest orderly and keepest the
 “law. As touching the Gentiles which believe,
 “we have written, and concluded that they observe
 “no such thing, &c.”

The believing Jews considered circumcision as an unspeakable privilege. The believing Gentiles considered it as a grievous and intolerable burden. The Apostle considered Baptism, as being to all intents and purposes, sufficient without circumcision. He supposed that the rite of circumcision was unnecessary, but not unlawful.—That it was neither required, nor prohibited under the Gospel dispensation; and therefore expedient and proper, that both Jews

and Gentiles should be gratified, although their wishes in this particular, were directly opposite to each other.

Saint Peter, who preached principally to the Jews, was denominated *the minister of the circumcision*; and Saint Paul, who preached principally to the Gentiles, was denominated *the minister of the uncircumcision*.

But it seems that some of those believing Jews, who were strongly prejudiced in favour of circumcision, and very strenuous, insisted that the Gentiles who believed, should be circumcised. Paul and Barnabas were deputed as messengers to Jerusalem concerning this question. A convention of Elders and Apostles was called. They deliberated, and decided agreeably to the opinion and practice of Saint Paul; and the decision was exceedingly gratifying to the Gentile converts.

The convention appear to have considered the case before them, principally, as a question of expediency. They did not prohibit the Jews from continuing the practice of circumcision; but thought it highly improper and impolitic, to impose this unnecessary burden on the believing Gentiles, it being very grievous and contrary to their inclination. A respectable committee was therefore appointed to make the communication, and to inform the Gentiles who believed, that those persons, who had troubled them about the necessity of circumcision, had acted,

in this particular, wholly without apostolic orders and authority.

You will find the whole affair very minutely related in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. But notwithstanding the result of this inspired and venerable council, Saint Paul tells the Galatians, in the second chapter, and 4th verse, that certain "*false brethren had been brought in unawares, who came privily to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.*" And in the 6th chapter, 12th and 13th verses, he acquaints them, that these false and hypocritical brethren "*constrain you to be circumcised, lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ; and that they may glory in your flesh.*" They pretended that circumcision was absolutely essential to salvation, and that this rite bound and obliged persons to keep the whole law of Moses.

Saint Paul was an acute reasoner. He sometimes reasoned from the principles of natural and revealed religion, and sometimes from the concessions and opinions of his adversaries. For the sake of argument, he sometimes admitted their erroneous principles, as was the case in those passages you have quoted; and this, I imagine, occasioned your mistake as to the meaning.

It was the opinion of that troublesome sect, and not strictly the opinion of Saint Paul, "*That every man who was circumcised,*

“ *was thereby become a debtor to do the whole law.*” It was literally true upon *their* principles, but not upon *his*, that if the Galatians had been “ *circumcised, Christ Jesus would have profited them nothing.*” For they held and endeavoured to persuade the Gentiles, “ *That unless they were circumcised, and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved.*”—“ *That justification and salvation were to be expected and obtained upon this condition.*” This the Apostle calls a *subversion of the Gospel of Christ*; and observes in the fourth verse, which immediately follows your quotation, “ *That Christ is become of no effect; whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.*”

Thus, as you have done, these hypocritical teachers, considered “ *the covenant of circumcision, as an important part of the law of Moses;*” and as that part which bound and obliged those persons who were circumcised to conform to all its other parts.

This false and dangerous construction greatly alarmed St. Paul. Although he had *circumcised* his beloved *Timothy*, whose mother was a Jewess, “ *he would not be compelled to circumcise Titus, who was a Greek.*”

But, independently of this erroneous opinion, the Apostle evidently considered *circumcision* merely as the former token of the *Abrahamic covenant*, and of no importance, one way or the other, as it respected the *justification and salvation* of believers. He

accordingly adds, in the 6th verse of the same chapter, "*For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love.*"

The last argument, which you adduce in order to show that the covenant of circumcision is disannulled, is taken from the 3d chapter of Galatians, 17th verse. "You tell us, that the covenant, which cannot be made void, was four hundred and thirty years before the law, whereas the covenant of circumcision was about four hundred and six years before the law; and consequently, that the covenant which was confirmed of God to Abraham in Christ, was while he was in uncircumcision, and about twenty-four years before the covenant of circumcision was given."

If we admit this calculation to be correct, it will afford no argument in favour of your opinion. You have indeed asserted that God made two distinct covenants with Abraham. This was necessary in order to support your hypothesis; but you have not proved the assertion, nor even attempted to produce any proof in its vindication. You have not pointed out the distinction or difference between these two covenants, or told us of any blessing stipulated in the first, that was not included in the last.

I have shown, in a preceding letter, that a covenant may be made, and may exist, without any external, visible token; that a token

may be affixed, at the very time when the covenant is made, or in any succeeding period; and that the token of the covenant is, by a figure, sometimes put for the covenant itself. You must allow, that circumcision was the token of *a covenant*; and how does it appear, that it was not the token of *that very same covenant*, which you say was made with Abraham *twenty-four years* before *this token* was appointed? The only question of any importance, in the present case, is this: Was the *covenant of circumcision*, strictly speaking, a new and distinct covenant, or was it the former covenant renewed? In order to solve this question rightly, we must attend to the articles of stipulation, and see if they agree in both cases; or at least, see if there was any privilege stipulated to Abraham and his seed, in the first covenant, which was not implied in the last.

In the 12th chapter of Genesis, 1st, 2d, 3d and 7th verses, we find Abraham commanded to leave his country, and kindred, and father's house, and to remove into an unknown land. "God promised, *I will bless thee and make thee a blessing; and in thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed; and I will make of thee a great nation, and unto thy seed will I give this land.*" This promise was expressly renewed with Abraham, about the time that Lot was separated from him.

In the 15th chapter we find Abraham complaining because he had no children.

God again promised “ that he should have a
 “ numerous posterity, and that his seed
 “ shou'd possess the land. *Abraham,*” we are
 told, “ *believed God, and it was counted to him for*
righteousness.” On this occasion, for the first
 time, the promise was denominated a cove-
 nant, as is particularly recorded in the 17th
 versè. “ *In that same day the Lord made a*
 “ *covenant with Abraham, saying, unto thy seed*
 “ *have I given this land, from the river of Egypt,*
 “ *to the great river, the river Euphrates.*”

It was undoubtedly a number of years
 after the promise was made, before God con-
 firmed it to Abraham in the form of a cove-
 nant; for he had, in the mean time, acquired
 great possessions, and a numerous household.

In the 17th chapter we have an account
 of the appointment of circumcision. I shall
 not specify any particular verse; for the
 whole chapter has reference to the impor-
 tant and solemn transaction, and merits our
 unprejudiced attention.

When “ *Abraham was ninety and nine years*
 “ *old, the Lord appeared to him and said, I am the*
 “ *Almighty God, walk before me and be thou per-*
 “ *fect; and I will make my covenant between me*
 “ *and thee,*” &c.

The blessing of this covenant, as we have
 observed, was promised to Abraham, when
 about seventy and five years old. This
 promise we have shown was afterward de-
 nominated a covenant; but still there was no
 token appointed to this covenant, either on

God's part, or on Abraham's. The design of the present interview was, to confirm the covenant, by appointing these external tokens. God therefore said, "*As for me, my covenant is with thee; neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.*" Here the *covenant* was put for the *token*. This *alteration* of the name was the *token* of the covenant, on God's part.

"And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt therefore keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every man child among you, shall be circumcised." Here again the *covenant*, by a very common figure, is put for the *token*, as appears undeniably from the very next words; "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a *token* of the covenant, betwixt me and you."

As the alteration of Abram's name was the visible token of the covenant on God's part, so circumcision was the visible token of the covenant on Abraham's part.

It will still appear more clearly, that this is the same covenant, which had been previously ratified, by considering and comparing the articles of stipulation. For on this, and on all the former occasions, we find that the blessing promised to Abraham was substan-

tially the same. It is now, however, as might have been expected, more particularly defined. In this 17th chapter of Genesis, which relates wholly to that covenant, of which circumcision was now appointed the token, *“ God promised Abraham a numerous posterity and the land of Canaan for a possession ;”* which blessing had been already repeatedly mentioned. He also now promised, *“ to be a God to him, and to his seed after him ;”* which comprehensive promise included every blessing, temporal and spiritual. But to be more particular, God now promised for the first time, that this covenant should be *everlasting*—*“ That Sarah shall bear thee a Son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac ; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.”*

In the 22d chapter, 15th, 16th and 17th verses, we find this same covenant again renewed and confirmed with the greatest solemnity conceivable. *“ By myself, have I sworn, saith the Lord ; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son ; that in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies ; and in thy seed, shall all families of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.”*

Thus you observe the process; and it exhibits a most striking, beautiful climax.

In the first instance, we see the blessing confirmed to Abraham and his seed by *promise*.

Secondly, this promised blessing is confirmed by covenant.

Thirdly, this covenanted blessing is confirmed by annexing the token of *circumcision*; and fourthly, by the *oath* of Almighty God.

We have said, that so far as any promise is conditional, it partakes the nature of a covenant. The promise made to Abraham, and the covenant of which circumcision was the token, appear to be substantially the same; this covenant therefore, has not been abolished as you supposed, but is confirmed and established.

This truth may be further demonstrated, by pointing out the occasion of your mistake. You have told us "that the covenant which cannot be made void, was 430 years before the law."

By fixing the date of the covenant, at the very time when *the promise* was first made to Abraham, it evidently appears that you must mean the same thing by *the covenant*, which St. Paul meant by *the promise*. And although, as we have observed, *the promise*, and *the covenant*, were substantially the same; yet the Apostle, in order to guard against mistakes, very carefully retains the nominal and circumstantial distinction; and accordingly

speaks of *the covenant*, which cannot be disannulled, and of *the promise*, which cannot be made void. But, neglecting the scripture language, and substituting the word *covenant*, in the room of the word *promise*, you have unhappily fallen into that very error, which he endeavoured to prevent.

If the words of the 17th verse in the 3d chapter of Galatians, were transposed as they ought to be, and the nominative case placed before, and the objective case after, the verb, according to the grammatical order of the English language, they would stand as follows: *And I say this, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after (the promise) can not disannul the covenant, which was before (the law) confirmed of God in Christ, that it should make the promise of none effect.*

Two prepositions are mentioned in this text, but no words expressed in order to be governed by them. It is therefore necessary, if we would make good grammar and good sense, that two words should be understood; and it is very easy to ascertain these words. The preposition *after*, evidently has reference to *the promise*, because the law was four hundred and thirty years *after the promise*. The preposition *before*, evidently has reference to *the law*, because the covenant was confirmed of God in Christ, four hundred and six years *before the law*. It was *confirmed*, as we have observed, by changing

the name *Abram* to *Abraham*, and by affixing the token of *circumcision*, and by the *oath of God*.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

SIR,

THE covenant of *circumcision* does not appear to be vacated, but confirmed and established. The blessings promised in this covenant were not wholly or principally of a temporal, but chiefly of a religious and spiritual nature. Accordingly, when the Apostle enquires, “*What advantage hath the Jew, and what profit is there of circumcision?*” he answers, “*much every way,*” much profit even of a temporal kind, “*but chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God.*” Their peculiar covenanted privileges were chiefly of a religious kind. *Circumcision* was a token of their faith in the God of Israel, and of their acknowledged allegiance to his authority and government. Abraham, we are told, “*received the sign (or sacrament) of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised.*”

The same gradation is observable with respect to Abraham’s faith and obedience, which has been noticed with respect to the

confirmation of the covenant. “*Abraham*
 “*believed God, and it was counted to him for*
 “*righteousness;*” accordingly the covenant
 was made and the blessing stipulated.

After this, in a formal and solemn manner,
 Abraham engaged to continue submissive
 and obedient, and then received the rite of
circumcision, as an obligatory seal; on his part
 of the covenant, of that obedience, or *right-*
eousness, which he had expressly promised;
 and which was to be the result of *that faith,*
which he had while uncircumcised.

The faithful, pious Patriarch, obeyed God
 in every particular; even in that hard and
 difficult case of offering up *Isaac, his only son,*
 upon the altar. Thus, you “*see, how faith,*
 “*wrought with his works and by works, was faith*
 “*made perfect.*”

He became, eminently, the *Father of them*
who believe. Believers, of every nation, are
 to be considered and treated as his seed. St.
 Paul concludes the third chapter to the Ga-
 latians, by saying, “ye are all the children
 “of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as
 “many of you as have been *baptized into*
 “*Christ,* have put on Christ. There is nei-
 “ther Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond
 “nor free; there is neither male nor fe-
 “male; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus;
 “and if ye be *Christ's,* then are ye *Abraham's,*
 “*seed and heirs according to the promise.*”

If believers are the reputed seed of Abra-
 ham and *heirs* to the blessing promised, even

as Isaac, then it follows, that they and their infant children have the same right to Baptism, the present visible, initiating token of the Abrahamic covenant, which Isaac and his infant children had to circumcision, the former token.

But, to this inference you object and say, "Abraham's children after the flesh were not included in the promise, as the Pædobaptist of our day would have theirs."

We have already anticipated the objection, but are not unwilling to consider it more particularly.

St. Paul, in the fourth chapter to the Galatians, speaking of the *bond woman and of the free woman, and of their children*, which he calls an *allegory*, says, "Abraham had two sons, one by a bond maid, and the other by a free woman; and he who was of the bond woman, was born after the flesh." But, Sir, how does this allegorical representation prove, that the children of believing parents "are born after the flesh?" If the Apostle had represented believers, as having like Ishmael, descended from Hagar, your conclusion would have been perfectly just; and it would be right to reject their children, as the Ishmaelites were rejected, from being God's covenant people. But on the other hand, what will become of your argument against infant Baptism? For we are told, that believers are not *children of the bond woman, but of the free. Sarah is the mother of us all; and we are heirs of the bles-*

ing, even as Isaac, who was born of promise, and after the Spirit. As this promise extended to the posterity of Isaac, so it extends to the children of believers. It is spoken of as being a precious *birthright*, and we are solemnly cautioned not to despise and sell it, as profane Esau, the son of Isaac, did.

In the language of prophecy, which is according to the foreknowledge of God, Jacob and his posterity are represented as having been chosen to be God's covenant people, and Esau and his posterity, as having been rejected, even before "they had done either good or evil." *All things are known unto God from the beginning to the end.* He sees intuitively the *thoughts and hearts of men afar off.* But *such knowledge is too wonderful for us.* We certainly need some external, visible rule, in order to direct our judgment and our conduct. It is absolutely necessary for us, to consider the covenant, and its members, and their requisite qualification, and mode of initiation, in a light that is visible to our finite capacity.

Accordingly, Ishmael was visibly in covenant, as truly as Isaac, until his unbelief appeared, and he was cast out, for mocking and persecuting his brother. Esau was visibly in covenant, as truly as Jacob, until his unbelief appeared, and he was rejected for despising and selling his birthright. Those Israelites, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, were visibly and truly in covenant,

until their unbelief appeared, and they were rejected and destroyed for their wickedness. The ten tribes were truly and visibly in covenant, until they became unbelievers, and were rejected for their revolt. The Jews were also truly and visibly in covenant, until broken off by unbelief, and rejected for their perverse and incorrigible infidelity.

Having become open and professed unbelievers, they had no longer any right to plead that faithful Abraham was their father, or expect to be considered and treated as *Israelites and children of the covenant*. The Apostle, in the 9th chapter to the Romans, informs them, “that *all are not Israel, who are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called; that is, they who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*”

Thus, reasoning from analogy, he proves to the unbelieving Jews, that their supposed right and title to covenant privileges and final salvation, on account of their descent from Abraham, were wholly without foundation.

Unbelieving Ishmael, who is represented as being born after the flesh, was Abraham's son; but the promise was not made unconditionally to him and his children, but to believing Isaac and his seed. Esau was Isaac's son, but he forfeited his birthright and lost

the blessing. He and his descendants were therefore rejected.

The promise is made to believing Jacob and his posterity, the Israelites.

Many of these Israelites, and finally the whole Jewish nation, like Esau, forfeited their birthright by unbelief, and lost the blessing of being God's covenant people. But the Abrahamic covenant, is not disannulled; for "*believers of every nation, are counted for his seed, and the promise is still made to them and their children.*" This is that covenant which, David tells us, "*God remembers forever; which covenant, he made with Abraham; and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law; and unto Israel, for an everlasting covenant.*"

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R' VIII.

SIR,

I TRUST you are now convinced that the Apostle did not mean the infant offspring of believing parents, by those persons, whom he styles, "*Children after the flesh.*" He evidently had reference to the unbelieving Jews; who, although they descended from *Israel*, were not true *Israelites*; they having,

like *mocking Ishmael and profane Esau*, forfeited and lost their *birthright*.

Agreeably to our Saviour's prediction, "*the vineyard—the kingdom is taken from them, and given to other nations.*" Covenant privileges are transferred to the believing Gentiles. This blessing now belongs to them and their children. It is their rightful inheritance, for they are *heirs, even as Isaac and Jacob*. Therefore, says St. Paul, "*ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*"

By *faith* we Gentiles are *grafted into the same olive tree from which the Jewish nation is broken off by unbelief*.

This covenant, as we have shown, has been repeatedly renewed, enlarged and improved, as to its privileges, and especially under the gospel dispensation. But no farther improvements are to be expected. The *testator* is dead; and hath sealed it with his blood.

The new covenant, or testament, as it is sometimes called, with all its spirituality and perfection, is but the antitype and accomplishment of the old testament.

The rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, or "*that covenant which God made with the house of Israel, when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt,*" is repealed; but it could not make void the Abrahamic covenant,

either when annexed to it, as an appendage, or when taken from it, as being no longer useful.

The covenant, which God made with Abraham, and which he so often confirmed and established, is now renewed for the last time. According to the prophet Jeremiah, it is now *put into the inward parts of mankind, and written in their hearts*, by being revealed and addressed (not to the external senses, and in types and figures, but) literally, to the understanding and conscience, in the plainest and most direct manner.

To *this covenant*, the Jews once belonged. From *this*, they have been broken off by unbelief; and into *this*, the Gentiles are now grafted by faith.

What other construction can you possibly put, upon that beautiful and instructive allegory, mentioned by St. Paul? I mean the olive tree. Could he intend that old covenant of Moses, which you say is abolished? It is impossible. The believing Gentiles are not grafted into a tree which is decayed and dead; but into a living and flourishing tree: And yet it is the very *same tree*, and very *same stock*, from which the Jews were broken off, and into which they will be again ingrafted as a people.

It is not intimated that every natural branch was broken off. Some remained as they originally were; and the Gentiles are

grafted in *among them*, and mutually partake of the *root and fatness of the olive*.

A tree which is alive, and has roots, and branches, and fatness, could not be substituted as a figure, to represent a covenant, that had been worn out with age, or was *ready to vanish away*.

Perhaps you would rather choose to suppose that this olive tree was intended to represent the new and gospel covenant, which is everlasting. But, Sir, this supposition is equally unfavourable to your scheme; for the unbelieving Jews, according to your opinion, never did belong to this new covenant, and it is absolutely impossible that a people should have been broken off from a covenant to which they did not belong; and equally impossible for the Gentiles to be grafted in as scions, before stocks were prepared, by cutting or breaking off the natural branches.

Thus the Apostle has provided with peculiar caution, against every species of misrepresentation. The olive tree cannot signify an old, abolished covenant, into which the believing Gentiles never were ingrafted; nor a new and gospel covenant, to which the unbelieving Jews never did belong, and from which of course, they could not have been broken off. It must therefore represent the Abrahamic covenant, which has been substantially the same in every succeeding age; from the days of Abraham until

the days of Christ; and from the days of Christ, until the present time; and will remain the same, so long as the sun and moon shall endure.

There is no difficulty in supposing that the unbelieving Jews were broken off from this covenant; and that the believing Gentiles were grafted into the same stock.

This supposition is intelligible and consistent, and it is the only intelligible and consistent one, that can be made.

It is the external, appointed seal or token, which principally constitutes the regular publicity or visibility of a covenant—the visibility of membership, and the visibility of initiation. And as this public, visible seal, or token, was first given and affixed to Abraham, it has commonly been called the Abrahamic covenant; and he has been denominated in scripture, “*the father of many nations, and the father of them who believe.*”

Before we leave this olive tree, let us turn our thoughts, for a moment, to the final restoration of the Jewish nation. The Apostle tells us, “*that if they abide not in unbelief, they shall be grafted in (again;) for God is able to graft them in again.*”

Their remarkable rejection, and miraculous preservation have astonished the world, and afford reason to expect that they will be restored to their native country, and to their original standing in covenant privileges. Those individuals, who existed in the days of

St. Paul, have been dead for many ages; They never can be re-ingrafted: But the nation lives; and as the nation has been rejected; so the nation will be restored—will be *again grafted into its own olive tree.*

This wonderful, national restoration will prove an unspeakable blessing to other nations. “*For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*” “In that day, we are told by the prophet, many nations shall be joined to the Lord; and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ.” But, Sir, how can nations and kingdoms be joined in covenant to the Lord, or belong to Christ’s visible kingdom, unless children are admitted with their believing parents? For children constitute a very great proportion of every nation and kingdom. It is impossible for the Jews as a nation, to be again ingrafted into their own olive tree, so long as their children are excluded. The children of this nation were originally included with their parents, in the visible covenant. When the parents became professed unbelievers, they and their children were broken off from the covenant; and it is absolutely necessary, in order to a national restoration, that both parents and children should be reinstated. These important truths are clearly revealed; and the very reason also mentioned, upon which they are founded. We are expressly

informed, that “the Jews *are beloved for the father’s sake*: And if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.”

To me it seems impossible to evade the Apostle’s meaning. His argument is cautiously constructed in the form of a dilemma, which, like the *cherubim and flaming sword*, turns every way, to guard the tree of life.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R IX.

SIR,

IT evidently appears, from the foregoing arguments and remarks, that the Christian or Gospel Covenant is the very same covenant which God formerly made and established with Abraham and his seed.

From this covenant, the natural descendants of Abraham are *broken off by unbelief*; but he being constituted the *Father of them who believe*, believing Gentiles are now *ingrafted, and counted for his seed, even as Isaac*; and consequently, their infant children have the same right of being visibly initiated into the visible covenant by Baptism, the present appointed token, which the children of Isaac had, of being admitted by circumcision, the former token of this covenant.

It is worthy your *particular* notice, that these infant children are not to be baptized, as being, *themselves*, the *seed of Abraham*, but as being the *children* or *property* of *believing parents*, who are counted for *his seed*. Esau and Jacob were not circumcised, as being the seed of Abraham, but as being the children of *believing Isaac*, who inherited the promises.

This ancient privilege of the Abrahamic covenant still belongs to the children of believers, as their birthright. It has never been revoked, but frequently confirmed in the most explicit manner.

I will readily agree with you, that infant Baptism has sometimes been grossly abused, and especially in former ages, by persons of a superstitious and fanatic temper of mind. They have considered and treated it as an affair of *infinite importance*—as absolutely essential to salvation. We are naturally shocked with the monstrous absurdity, and even impiety of such conduct; and in the transports of our indignation, are apt to hurry away into the opposite extreme.

But, Sir, the Baptists have not been always free from superstition and enthusiasm. Too much stress has sometimes been laid upon adult Baptism, and the mode of Baptizing. It was once thought necessary by some, that the persons baptized should be dipped three times, and with their bodies almost, or entirely naked.

Abuses, of every kind, should be corrected, but ought never to be mentioned as an objection or argument, either against the mode or subjects of Baptism. You might, with as much propriety, argue against the practice of eating and drinking, because some men are gluttons and drunkards; or even against the christian religion, (as infidels do) because some christians, in their intemperate and bigotted zeal for extending and purifying the church, have enslaved and sacrificed millions of their fellow-creatures.

There is no blessing—no religious privilege or institution, but what has, in some instances, been abused. We ought to correct abuses of every kind, and carefully guard against them; but they afford no reason why we should object to an ordinance of God, or treat it with indifference and neglect.

Infant Baptism is a sacred dedication of little children to God, the supreme and universal Parent. The service is natural, and rational, and religious. It is a duty, in its very nature, as suitable and proper, as prayer to God in behalf of our children. The pious father and mother, while their hearts are warm with gratitude, and a sense of their obligation, feel disposed to acknowledge, publicly, the divine goodness; and dedicate, publicly, their infant child to God; and bind themselves, publicly, by solemn vows, to educate their child in a religious manner.

This solemn transaction undoubtedly tends to incline the devout parents, if their child should be taken away by death, to resign it with more cheerfulness; and if the life of their child should be spared, to train it up with greater care and diligence, in the ways of religion and virtue. It will also tend to excite suitable thoughts and sentiments in the young and tender mind of their child, when it shall become capable of reflection and consideration.

And now, Sir, if any doubts remain, respecting the qualification of children for being thus religiously dedicated to God in Baptism, I must refer you to their professed Friend and Patron, Jesus Christ. "Have you never read," says he, "that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise?" Jesus, we are told, called a *little child* unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said; "verily I say unto you, except *ye be converted* and become as *little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—"Whosoever therefore shall *humble himself as this little child*, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven; and whoso shall receive one such little one, in my name, receiveth me; and whoso shall offend one of these little ones, who believe in me (tōn pisteuontōn, of those *parents*) who believe in me) it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned.

“in the depth of the sea.” “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father.”

“And they brought unto him young children”—St. Mark calls them little children, and St. Luke calls them *infants*, “that he should touch them—that he should lay his hands on them and pray; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them; but when Jesus saw it, he was *much displeas- ed*, and said unto them, *suffer little children* to come unto me and forbid them not, for *of such is the kingdom of God*; verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, shall not enter therein.”

I cannot find that our Saviour ever stiled these little children “Christless,” or that he represented them as unfit for his covenant or kingdom. But being a tender faithful Shepherd, his watchful care extended to every part of the flock. As the prophet had foretold, “*he gathered the lambs with his arms and carried them in his bosom.*” And after his resurrection from the dead, he expressly commanded *Peter*, in presence of the other Apostles, *to feed his sheep and feed his lambs.*

And, would not these Apostles, in their circumstances, very naturally suppose, that it was the intention of Christ, that the infant children of believers should be admitted, together with their parents, into his visible

kingdom? And would they not consider themselves, as authorized, by their commission, to apply the discriminating token? Let us not forget that these Apostles were Jews—were men who had been educated in the knowledge of that covenant, which God made with Abraham, and believed it was still in full force. They knew that infants had always been admitted with their believing parents, into covenant, and viewed this as an unspeakable privilege. They knew that the *Gentiles* were now about to be *grafted into the same olive tree*; and be received as “*fel-*”
“*low-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers*”
“*of his promise in Christ by the Gospel.*”—They knew it had been the constant and immemorial practice of the Jewish nation, to baptize those *Gentiles* who were proselyted to their religion; and that they baptized the infant children, males and females, together with their believing parents; and that these infants, as well as the adults, were called proselytes.—They had often seen infant children dedicated to God in the temple, and by his own appointment.—They had very frequently heard their Divine Master express the most kind and charitable regard for little children.—They were present, when infant children were brought, in the arms of their believing parents, to Christ, for his prayers and blessing; and when he took them into his own arms and blessed them, declaring in the most solemn and publick manner, *that of*

such his kingdom consisted.—The Apostles well remembered how much their Lord was displeased, and how severely he reproved them, for attempting to prevent these religious parents from doing their duty in this respect.

During the ministration of Jesus Christ, their apostolic services had been confined to the *Jewish nation*; but they were now commanded to *disciple or proselyte all nations, baptizing them, &c.* The duties of their commission were expressed in the most concise and general terms. There was no mention or exception made, of men, women or children. They would therefore have supposed that persons of these several descriptions were included, as had always been the case under former dispensations.—A profession of faith and repentance had been required of adult Gentile proselytes, in order to circumcision and baptism, and is still required of adults, as equally necessary in order to Baptism under the Gospel of Christ. The incapacity of infant children to believe, or to profess their faith, did not disqualify and preclude them from receiving the token of the covenant, under former dispensations—and why should the Apostles suppose them, on this account, disqualified and precluded under the Gospel institution? If Christ had intended that infants should *not* have been baptized, he would undoubtedly have mentioned expressly his intention. But the Apostles

were *not* prohibited; infants were *not* excepted in their commission. They would therefore have naturally and necessarily supposed them included.

We have no direct evidence, or even intimation, that the Apostles refused, or neglected to baptize infants. But on the other hand, there appears to be the strongest probability, if not absolute certainty, from a great variety of substantial reasons and convincing circumstances, that they did administer Baptism to the infant children of believers.

Those adult persons, who believed and professed their faith, were baptized. The *Failer*, and *Stephanus*, and *Lydia*, believed and were baptized. We are expressly informed, that their *households* were also baptized; but it is not said, nor even intimated, that they believed, or exhibited any profession of faith or repentance. The very manner, in which the story of their Baptism is related, shows plainly that they were baptized on the account of their believing parents.

There is certainly a vast difference in the genius and temper of children, even from their early infancy. We cannot tell what influence is afforded them by the divine Spirit, or how he operates, in forming their young and tender minds to virtue, and in preparing them for future usefulness. It is, however, evident, that many are sanctified while infants. Thus it was with many of the ancient prophets and primitive saints. We

are told that the “Prophet *Isaiah*, was called
 “and formed from the womb, to be a peculiar
 “messenger of heaven, to instruct and re-
 “claim the people.” Concerning *Jeremiah*,
 it is said, “Before I formed thee in the belly, I
 “knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of
 “the womb, I sanctified thee, and ordained thee a
 “prophet unto the nations.” St. Luke informs
 us, “That *John*, the Forerunner of Christ, was
 “filled with the Holy Ghost, from his mother’s
 “womb.” St. Paul tells us, that *Timothy* in-
 herited the “Faith that first dwelt in his grand-
 “mother *Lois* and mother *Eunice*.” Being de-
 scended from pious ancestors, he was relig-
 iously educated; and “knew even from a
 “child the sacred scriptures, which were a-
 “ble to make him wise to salvation, through
 “faith that is in Jesus Christ.”

When the time of our Saviour’s advent
 drew nigh, the first person who exulted at
 his approaching nativity, was an unborn in-
 fant. Little infants were the first who suffer-
 ed martyrdom on his account.—The barba-
 rous *Herod* sacrificed thousands—“All the
 “children in *Bethlehem*, under the age of
 “two years.” Young children were the first
 who sang *hosanna to the Son of David*, *blessed*
is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,
hosanna in the highest. “It was predicted,
 “that his praises should be perfected by the
 “mouth of babes and sucklings.” No won-
 der that the Saviour should feel a very spe-
 cial regard for infants—for little children;—

that he should provide for them a place in his gracious covenant;—that he should order their names to be enrolled, and *Baptism*, the appointed token of admission, to be affixed; hereby binding their parents by a publick and solemn engagement, to discipline and train them up for him, as his disciples or scholars, regularly initiated into his visible kingdom and school, for the sake of religious instruction and education.

Solomon says, “train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he shall not depart from it.” One great and leading design, in the appointment of infant circumcision, and of infant Baptism, was to secure, so far as is possible, the religious education of children. The faithful and exemplary character of Abraham, as the head of a numerous family, was a principal reason, why he was so remarkably distinguished.—“I know him,” says God, that he will *command his children and his household* after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham, that which he hath spoken of him.”

By devoting our infant children to God—to Christ, we are reminded that they belong to him—that they are his by creation, and by redemption, and by dedication—that he actually claims them as his peculiar property, and expressly requires us to instruct and

educate them in the ways of religion and virtue.

In order to accomplish this important purpose, the Israelites were commanded to embrace all suitable occasions, and to adopt every proper method. "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. *And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them as a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates.*"

We are apt to neglect this important duty until it is too late. But infant Baptism teaches us, that children are the proper objects of our religious care and attention as soon as born—that we ought without delay to pray for them, and dedicate them to God, and whenever they are capable of being instructed, afford them all necessary and useful instruction.—The prophet Isaiah enquires thus, "whom shall we teach knowledge? and whom shall we make to understand doctrine?" And answers, "them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts. For line must be

“ upon line, line upon line ; precept upon precept,
 “ precept upon precept ; here a little and there a
 “ little.”

David tells us that God “ established a testi-
 “ mony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel,
 “ which he commanded our fathers that they should
 “ make them known to their children ; that the
 “ generation to come might know them, even the
 “ children which should be born ; who should arise
 “ and declare them to their children ; that they
 “ might set their hope in God, and not forget the
 “ works of God, but keep his commandments.”

The great Jehovah claims a special right in the children of those parents who have devoted and given up themselves to him, according to the tenor of his gracious covenant. “ In the scriptures, God styles them “ my children”—“ Children whom thou hast born unto me.” “ They are denominated the “ heritage of the Lord.” “ All souls,” says God, “ are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the “ soul of the son is mine.” And the Saviour expressly commands us, “ to render unto God “ the things which are Gods.” How natural, and how reasonable is it then, for us to dedicate ourselves and our children to him. The dedication of ourselves is first, in the order of nature, and of propriety. We are told that “ God had respect unto Abel, and then “ unto his offering.”

One principal thing implied in Baptism, is the dedication of the person baptized, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Every adult

person to whom the gospel or covenant of grace is published and offered, is under obligations to subscribe with his own hand to the Lord.—He is required to dedicate himself sincerely and truly to God, and to his service. And as children are, in some sense, the peculiar property, and even a part of parents, it is also equally proper, and their incumbent duty, to dedicate them to God in the way and method of his appointment. The practice has been clearly authorized, by the unrevoked mandate of heaven, and by the approved example of pious parents.

In the covenant made with Abraham, God expressly required, that every male child, when *eight days old, should be circumcised*. Circumcision was a religious dedication of these little children to God; on which occasion, a form of solemn and appropriate words was used and prayers were offered up to him in their behalf.

The Israelites were also commanded to *sanctify* and dedicate their *first born* to God. In conformity to this law, *the holy Child Jesus, was presented by his parents to the Lord in his temple*. The pious mother of Samuel dedicated her infant son to God, and pursuant to her vow, as soon as he was weaned, she left him to serve in the temple, under the tuition and direction of Ely the high priest.

We find the mother of King Lemuel, mentioned in the last chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon, as remonstrating *with the son of*

her vows. "What my son? And what the son of my womb? And what the son of my vows? Give not thy strength to women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings, to drink wine, nor princes strong drink; lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of the afflicted."

Although the Levites were not allowed to officiate until twenty-five years old, they were set apart and devoted to the service of the sanctuary from their earliest infancy. The Korathites were a particular order of the Levites, and set apart to be *keepers of the charge of the sanctuary*. This appointment to office included their posterity. Infants, although incapable of officiating, were discriminated by the same title. They were called *keepers of the charge of the sanctuary*; as we read in Numb. iii. 28. "In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were eight thousand six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary." To this employment they were devoted, and consecrated, when *but one month old*.

Little children in general were dedicated to God, and admitted into covenant with him; as we find in Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. "Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God; the captains of your tribes, your elders, your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, that

“ thou shouldst enter into covenant with the
 “ Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the
 “ Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.”

In the language of the old testament, you clearly see, that *infant children, and little ones*, are said to be *keepers of the sanctuary*; and to be *entered into covenant with God*. Now, a *covenanter*, a *profelyte*, and a *disciple*, are words, according to customary usage, of the same signification. These observations serve to illucidate the subject under consideration, and plainly teach us in what manner the Apostles understood their commission.

When sent forth to teach, or *make disciples of all nations* (as you justly acknowledge the original word signifies) they would certainly suppose, that by the general term, *all nations*, Christ meant to include persons of both sexes, and of all ages—that he meant to include infants, among the number of his *disciples*, as had always been the practice under former dispensations. This is evident from his own express declarations, with respect to infants, on other occasions; for *he declared that they belonged to his kingdom*. We are told, that *he took a child and set him in the midst of them; and when he had taken him into his arms, he said, whosoever shall receive this child, in my name—as belonging to me; or as it is expressed by St. Mark, whosoever shall receive one of such children, in my name, receiveth me, and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me*. Now, to receive a person, whether a-

dult or infant, *in the name of Christ*, is to receive him as his *disciple*, as *belonging to him*, as being a scholar, or member of that kingdom—of that school, over which he is the head—the Lord and Master. Thus the Saviour has explained these very words, using them with particular reference to his Apostles, as in Mark ix, 41. “For whosoever shall give to you a cup of water to drink, *in my name*, because ye *belong to Christ*, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.” And also, when he sent them forth, two and two, before his crucifixion, to preach the gospel, we find the same expression, as it is in Matthew x, 40, 42. “He that *receiveth you receiveth me*, and he that *receiveth me receiveth him that sent me*.” “And whosoever shall give to drink, unto *one of these little ones*, a cup of cold water only, *in the name of a disciple*, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.”

This child was a *little one*; so small that Christ took him into his arms, but yet he was a real *disciple*—a member of his kingdom. The soul of an infant is as precious as the soul of an adult person. The Saviour therefore makes no distinction between his *infant* and his *adult disciples*. He, who receiveth an *infant*, and he who receiveth an *Apostle*, *in the name of Christ*—*in the name of a disciple*—as *belonging to Christ*, receiveth Christ; and he who receiveth Christ receiveth the Father who sent him.

The Greek word *Mathetēs*, which is translated a *disciple*, is derived from *manthanō*, which signifies *to learn*. A *disciple* and a *scholar*, are convertible terms—words of the same meaning. Adult persons, who wish to be the scholars of a particular master, put themselves under his tuition ; but little children are commonly placed, by their parents, under the care of some instructor, in order to be governed and taught, according to the regulations and discipline of his school. In this way they are regularly admitted—their names are registered, and they are bound to submit to his authority and orders, for the purpose of being instructed and educated.

The Apostles regarded their Master, as an extraordinary *Teacher, sent from God* ; and being commissioned by him “ *to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,*” they undoubtedly considered themselves authorized to initiate as disciples by baptism, into his visible kingdom, adult believers and their infant children. This formal and regular admission as disciples was in order to prepare the way for religious discipline, instruction and education. For being thus regularly admitted, “ *Christ ordered his Apostles to teach them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded ; at the same time promising his gracious presence and assistance, even until the end of the world.*”

If we would rightly understand any ancient institution, according to its original extent and meaning, we must carefully inform ourselves with respect to the relative circumstances and customs of that particular age and country, for which it was primarily intended.

If Christ had intended that infants should not be baptized, it would then have been necessary for him to have mentioned his intention; but as there was no prohibition, or intimation of this kind, the Apostles would have supposed that they were bound to baptize them, as a thing of course.

Some persons, at the present day, appear strongly prejudiced against infant Baptism; but the Apostles had no such prepossessions. Their principles, prejudices and expectations were habitually in favour of this doctrine. The manner in which infants had always been treated in the Abrahamic covenant—under the Mosaic dispensation, and even by our Lord and Master himself, would have led them to this conclusion.

The practice of the Apostles was evidently conformable to this opinion. St. Peter, in his very first sermon, which was so successful, having exhorted his hearers to repent and be *baptized*, adds, *for the promise is to you and your children*. He certainly had reference to that remarkable promise which God made in the Abrahamic covenant; and thus his hearers, who were Jews and profec-

lytes, must have understood him. In this covenant, which was formed by God himself, and which had been supported more than two thousand years, by his lively oracles, and which was declared to be everlasting, it was expressly promised, *I will be a God to thee and to thy seed.* Pursuant to this promise, children were admitted with their parents, into the same covenant. This the Jews esteemed an unspeakable privilege; and they who believed had not the least suspicion of being deprived of it, by embracing the gospel of Christ.

There was a time, when their fears were a little alarmed, by means of misrepresentation, with respect to the conduct of St. Paul, but the mistake was soon removed; and they never had any such apprehensions, either from the preaching or practice of the other Apostles. The unbelieving Jews, no where objected to the gospel, on the account of its excluding their infant children from the covenant. Indeed, an exclusion of this kind is not so much as once mentioned, in the New Testament, either with approbation or disapprobation, by those who believed, or disbelieved the gospel of Christ. This demonstrates, that the innovation, which you have supposed, never did take place among them.

Those principles and customs, which are universally admitted, or universally rejected, have no opposers and no advocates; and these are the only principles and customs

about which there is no controversy. An attempt to make innovations and alterations in the affairs and regulations, either of church or state, always produces opposition and disputes.

The Jews were not a very compliant, passive people, but strenuously attached to the principles and forms of their religion. As Mr. Edwards justly observes, "they would wrangle for a rite, quarrel for a fast, and almost fight for a new moon." St. Luke, in his history of the Acts of the Apostles, informs us, *that many thousands of the Jews believed, and that they all were zealous of the law.* Believers and unbelievers were equally zealous for their established principles and customs.

We cannot reasonably suppose that these Jews would have quietly relinquished those long approved principles and customs, of which they were religiously and extravagantly tenacious; that they would have tamely consented to see their children excluded and precluded *the covenant of promise*, and never once open their mouths by way of opposition or complaint. It is no where intimated in the New Testament, that any friend or foe to the christian religion, ever said one word, for or against this great, supposed innovation. The supposition is therefore inadmissible. The pretended alteration is incredible. It never did take place. The infant children of believing parents never were rejected, or excluded from God's gracious covenant. The Jews had no occasion to complain and

find fault ; and this is the only way, in which we can possibly account for their perfect silence, in the present case. The necessity of circumcision was superseded by Baptism, but as we have observed, the covenant and the members thereof, remained substantially the same.

Those Jews, who believed and had been baptized, were desirous of having the practice of circumcision still continued ; and it appears that they were indulged. But the Apostles would not consent to have this grievous burden imposed on the believing Gentiles, contrary to their wishes and remonstrances. The Apostles considered circumcision as unnecessary, but not as unlawful ; they therefore, upon the principle of expediency, discontinued the practice among the believing Gentiles, and upon the same principle allowed it to be continued among the believing Jews ; but were very careful to inform them that circumcision was no longer essential—not being required under the mild dispensation of the gospel ;—that *Baptism* was the *circumcision of Christ* ;—that *having been baptized, they were complete in him*, without being chirurgically or literally circumcised ; that *believers of every nation were the seed of Abraham, and heirs even as Isaac* ;—that *the promise was made to them and their children* ; and, consequently, the children of believers have the same right to Baptism, which the children of Isaac had to circumcision. It was upon this principle, undoubtedly, that

the Apostle baptized the households of believing parents.

The adult believer, who devotes himself to Christ in Baptism, hereby declares publicly his faith in the christian religion, and promises that he will endeavour to conduct agreeably to its laws and ordinances. When the believing parent thus dedicates his child to Christ in Baptism, he hereby acknowledges him to be the Redeemer and Saviour of infant children, as well as of adults. He engages to co-operate with Christ, in the use of suitable and appointed means, in order to train up his children for him, in the ways of religion and virtue.

The best institutions have been neglected by some, and abused by others. Thus the ordinance of Baptism has been often treated, both as it respects adults and infants. But still it is an ordinance of great importance; and well calculated to secure the obedience of parents, and the religious and virtuous education of children. Infant Baptism has frequently reminded parents of their obligations, and has excited them *to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. It has frequently reminded children of their duty, and has produced happy effects upon their hearts and lives. David says, *they that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God; and shall still bring forth fruit in old age*.

I am, Sir, &c.

P A R T II.

ON THE MODE OF BAPTIZING.

L E T T E R X.

SIR,

AS was proposed, I have attempted to vindicate the rite of *infant Baptism*, and am now ready to consider the different modes of baptizing, and show the propriety of administering this religious ordinance to the proper subjects, according to the usual practice of applying or sprinkling water upon them, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

But before we proceed, let it be premised, that you and I are agreed in the lawfulness and validity of Baptism, when administered by immersion. There is therefore no controversy between us upon this point. But you pretend that immersion is the *only* lawful and valid mode; that all other modes of baptizing are unlawful and invalid; and in order to support this opinion you have quoted the greater part, if not all, those passages of scripture, which relate to Baptism,

and then conclude your first sermon, by observing, “ We see that every thing looks as though immersion might be the mode, and as for sprinkling, there is, to say the least, nothing that looks like it.”

To me, Sir, it appears unaccountable, and even impossible, that so many great and good men (yourself among the rest) should, for so long a time, remain in the belief and practice of a certain mode of baptizing, when they could, and can find nothing, in the sacred volume, “ that even looks like it.”

It seems, however, that you have, of late, altered your opinion, and now see with different eyes ; but your brethren in the ministry have not altered theirs. They still consider the practice of sprinkling, pouring, &c. as sufficiently and clearly warranted in the holy scriptures ; and that those “ threescore passages,” mentioned by you, as favouring the mode of plunging, might have been cited as properly and as conclusively, by any other person, even in favour of the more usual modes of baptizing.

The publick now have, before them, your assertion and mine ; but all unprejudiced persons of sense will think that we ought to produce better reasons for their belief.

You tell us, in your second sermon, “ that to *baptize*, signifies to plunge under water, to dip, or wash the body all over.” “ That Baptism signifies to dip, plunge, immerse, or wash the body all over in water.” And

for proof appeal to Schrevelius' Lexicon, Butterworth's Concordance, Entick's and Bailey's Dictionaries; and also to three noted witnesses, viz. Calvin, Zanchius, and good Dr. Owen. You appear to place the greatest stress conceivable, upon your aforesaid definitions of *Baptism* and to *baptize*, &c. and also upon the meaning of the original words, *Baptisma* and *baptizō*.

Having consulted your Greek Lexicon, Concordance and Dictionaries, you inform us, in sermon v, page 69, "The evidence produced from their united testimony was in short the following: That the plain, literal, and common, if not universal, signification of the words *Baptism* and to *baptize*, is immersion and to immerse, bury in water, to dip, or to plunge a person all over in water."

I believe, Sir, that no one will dispute what these men have testified. We all are willing to acknowledge, that persons may be lawfully baptized, by dipping or immersion; and that this mode is agreeable to the "plain, literal, and common signification of the word *Baptism* and to *baptize*."

Those authors, whom you have instanced as authorities, in the present case, according to your own confession, have not said nor intimated, that to dip or immerse, was the "universal" and only "signification of the word, to baptize." The words, "*plain, literal, and common,*" are adjectives, and admit

of different degrees of comparison. Dipping may be a "*plain, literal, and common*" signification of the word *Baptism*, and yet there may be, and undoubtedly are, other significations, *more or less* plain, literal, and common, according to the different views and apprehensions of different persons. This, I am sensible, is not your sentiment. According to your opinion, to *baptize*, signifies to *dip, or immerse* in water, *exclusively of all other significations—to dip and nothing else*; and, consequently, that all other modes of baptizing are unlawful and invalid—a mere nullity or mockery. This is the ground on which you stand. It has not perhaps been explicitly avowed. But it is absolutely necessary, that the question between us should be correctly and intelligibly stated.

Let us now examine more critically the Lexicons and Dictionaries. Schrevelius, that great master and critick in the Greek tongue, when defining the verb *Baptizō*, gives three definitions, viz. *Baptizo, mergo, lavo*. But what does his first definition, *baptizo*, mean? Why has he, instead of translating, as in other cases, *transcribed*, the original word, and transferred it into the Latin language? Undoubtedly because he considered the word as having several significations; and that it ought not, when applied to the Christian Baptism, to be restricted to any one mode of baptizing. The Latin word *mergo*, I admit, signifies to *plunge*. The word

lavo, is of various significations, one of which is, according to Young's Latin Dictionary, to besprinkle. Cole's Latin Dictionary, as you have observed, when translating the word *baptizo*, mentions, to sprinkle, as being one of its significations. One definition of Baptism, in Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary, is also to sprinkle water (*aspergere aquam.*)

Let us now enquire how Schrevelius defines the Greek substantives, *Baptismos* and *Baptisma*. *Baptismos*, he translates into the Latin word *Lotio*, which signifies bathing, or any kind of washing, without being restricted to the mode. But the Greek word *Baptismos*, I believe, is never once made use of by the Apostles, in the new Testament, with reference to the Christian Baptism. They have, for this purpose, invariably used the word *Baptisma*, which Schrevelius, in his Lexicon, defines thus, if it can be called a definition. *Baptisma, Baptisma, Baptism.* He has not presumed to translate the word, but with redoubled caution, has twice transcribed it; in the first place, literally, for the Latin language, and in the second place, with only the omission of the last letter, for the English language. He did not suppose that the original word was restricted to one signification exclusively, or to one mode of baptizing, and therefore chose to leave it undecided; as Christ and his Apostles had left it.

Our translators of the Greek Testament have proceeded with the same religious cau-

tion. In all the Latin Testaments that I have seen, the original words are not Latinized, but transcribed; and thus it is in our English Testaments. The original words, when they relate to the ordinance of Baptism, are not Englished, as in other cases, but *transcribed*. Baptize and Baptism are neither Latin nor English, but Greek words, transcribed from the Greek Testament.

As the inspired writers have not defined the sense, in which the original words should be used, those learned Divines, who translated the new Testament, refused to define them, by substituting the English words, sprinkling, or dipping. An attempt to restrict the meaning to any particular mode of baptizing, they viewed as impious—like the presumptuous conduct of Uzzah, who officiously *put forth his hand to steady the ark of God*.

Perry's Dictionary is equally cautious.—
 “Baptize, is defined to christen. Baptism, a
 “sacrament which admits into the church. Bap-
 “tist, he who administers Baptism. Baptistory,
 “the place where persons are baptized.”

Let us now see what the great Dr. Johnson's Dictionary says, which excels all others, in the accurate definition of words. “Bap-
 “tism; Baptism is given by water, and that pre-
 “script form of words, which the church of Christ
 “doth use. Baptize; to christen; to administer
 “the sacrament of Baptism. Baptist; he that
 “administers Baptism.” And even Entick

defines Baptism, as being “*a sacrament that admits into the church.*” How cautiously have these great criticks avoided saying any thing about the mode of administering the Christian Baptism. They considered the peculiarity of the mode, whether it be sprinkling, pouring, dipping, &c. as not being specified by the pen of inspiration, and consequently, as not being essential to the ordinance of Baptism.

This kind of criticism is, in my opinion, of very considerable importance; and I wonder that you could so entirely overlook it.

Let us now attend to what your three witnesses say. You tell us, “that Calvin, a very warm opposer of the Baptist, as a witness, shall come first; his testimony is, *howbeit, the very word of baptizing, signifies to dip.*”

“Zanchius says, *baptizō, is to immerse, plunge under, overwhelm in water.*”

“Dr. Owen says, the original signification of *baptizō, is to dip, to plunge.*”

These men, Sir, have asserted what no person denies; for every one will readily allow that, *baptizō, signifies to dip.* Your witnesses have not said, nor intimated, that *to dip,* was the *only* signification of the word *baptizō.* This was not their opinion, nor did they intend or expect, to be thus understood. Calvin, in particular, was a zealous advocate for the mode of pouring or sprinkling. In his institutes, he says, “the difference is of no moment, whether he who is baptized,

“ be dipped all over, and if so, whether
 “ thrice or once, or whether he be only wet-
 “ ted by the water poured on him.” “ So
 “ little difference in ceremony ought not to
 “ be considered by us of such importance,
 “ as on that account to rend the church, or
 “ trouble it with broils.” Dr. Owen, also,
 expressly says, as Mr. Booth himself ac-
 knowledges, “ that the original and natural
 “ signification of baptizō, imports to dip, to
 “ plunge, to dye ; yet it also signifies, to *wash*
 “ or *cleanse*.”

You further inform us, “ that you could
 “ bring forward a multitude of witnesses, and
 “ all from our own order, the Pædobaptists,
 “ to prove the same point, but in the mouth
 “ of two or three witnesses, if they be good
 “ ones, every word shall be established.”

I am sensible that you might, instead of
 selecting three, have named the whole num-
 ber of eighty-two, mentioned by Mr. Booth.
 But, Sir, we ought to remember that these
 faithful witnesses, were not volunteers. They
 have been pressed into your service, even
 since they were dead, and deprived of an
 opportunity to vindicate themselves.—Their
 testimony ought to have been considered and
 reported with the utmost impartiality and
 fairness.

The various quotations of Mr. Booth, re-
 lative to positive institutions, and to general
 rules for understanding and interpreting
 scripture, would be, I presume, much more

intelligible and instructive to many of his readers, if they were but acquainted with the particular cases, for which those learned and respectable authors intended, and to which they applied them. The application which has been made by Mr. Booth and yourself, especially with respect to the mode of Baptism, does not appear to be so candid as could be wished, nor so judicious and conclusive as you and that gentleman seem to have imagined.

I am ready to allow that some persons, who believe in infant Baptism, as being of divine appointment, have been in the habit of *dipping* infants as well as adults. This has been, and still is the practice of the Greek churches. Others also, who are in the habit of administering Baptism by pouring or sprinkling, have, for various reasons, wished that the mode of dipping might obtain. Some have supposed dipping to be the most ancient and significant mode; and have, on these accounts, wished it to prevail; and some have wished it, for the sake of uniformity, being wearied out with a very unpleasant and unprofitable controversy. But probably, not one of those men, whose names have been mentioned, did believe that the mode of dipping, was essential to the ordinance of Baptism. It was their opinion, that persons might be baptized lawfully, by having water poured or sprinkled upon them; and that these modes of baptizing were agreeable to

the signification of the original word *baptizō*. Thus this cloud of witnesses, instead of testifying in favour of the Baptist principle, respecting the *necessity* of dipping, have generally and decidedly testified against it.

Mr. Booth, as he says, "in order to prevent mistakes," has desired the reader to observe, that no inconsiderable part of these learned authors have *asserted*, that the word *Baptism*, signifies *pouring* or *sprinkling*, as well as immersion. He and you have told us, what each individual said concerning *dipping*; but have not been so impartial as to inform us, what they individually said, concerning *pouring* and *sprinkling*. It is certainly incumbent on witnesses, and equally incumbent on those who report their testimony, to relate *the whole truth*, as well as nothing but the truth.

Before we dismiss this argument, let us spend a moment in examining the testimony of the Quakers, which appears to be considered, by some persons, as of peculiar importance in the present controversy. Mr. Booth styles them "the impartial, disinterested friends of the Baptist."—and tells us, "that they despise infant sprinkling." Some learned Quakers, it seems, have supposed that dipping was the primitive mode of baptizing; and that the original word *baptizō*, signifies to *dip*, to *plunge*. And their opinion in this respect is thought to be of the greatest weight and authority, because they "are the

impartial, disinterested friends of the Baptist." But how does their impartiality appear? In denying and in rejecting all water Baptism. And how does their disinterested friendship appear? "In despising infant sprinkling," and in advocating the mode of dipping, in which they seem to have no interest. The truth, however, is this: the Quakers are as much opposed to plunging, as they are to sprinkling, and to adult Baptism, as they are to infant Baptism; but they are, comparatively, a small sect, like the Baptist; and nothing is more common, than for different sects, of the most unfriendly and opposite sentiments, to unite harmoniously, in order to divide and destroy a more numerous and powerful society of men. The Quakers consider the Baptist, as approaching nearest to their religious system, and are ready to hope and expect, that, if by joining with them, they should be able to overthrow the doctrine of infant Baptism, which they view as the principal barrier, adult plunging or Baptism would soon be renounced as a thing of course. This is the Quaker policy. They are not less partial to their own principles, nor less desirous of making proselytes, than christians of other denominations.

Thus, the supposed argument in favour of immersion *exclusively*, resulting from the "disinterested friendship of the Quakers," appears to be miserably weak—entirely without foundation. And certainly they did not

excel in Greek criticism; nor ever pretend, that to dip, or immerse, was the *only* signification of the original word *baptizō*.

Among the numerous and various authorities that have been produced, there is not a single instance of direct and positive testimony; nor the least degree of evidence, to prove that the original word *baptizō*, signifies to dip or immerse, *and nothing else*; or that the original word *Baptisma*, signifies dipping or immersion, *and nothing else*. Indeed, I never yet found this sentiment openly and explicitly avowed, by any learned writer, or critick in the Greek language.

But on the other hand, a very large number of the most respectable and critical Authors, Professors, and Expositors, have expressly asserted that the word *Baptizō*, according to its true and original meaning, has various significations;—that it signifies to wet with water, *partially*, as well as totally, and by *sprinkling* or *pouring*, &c. as well as by dipping or immersion. This is what Mr. Booth has acknowledged, and none can deny it. I will, however, mention a few instances, extracted chiefly from Mr. Walker's very learned treatise on the doctrine of Baptisms.

“Leigh, in his *Critica Sacra*, says, that
 “Baptism is such a kind of washing, as is by
 “plunging, and yet it is taken more largely,
 “for *any kind of washing*, rinsing or cleansing,
 “even where there is *no dipping at all.*”

“Christ,” says he, “no where requires dipping, but baptizing”—“to sprinkle or wash one’s body, sacramentally.”

“Zelenus, that learned man, saith, Baptism, if you consider the etymology of the word, signifies dipping, and also sprinkling.”—“He says, that dipping was formerly more used, especially in the hot countries of Judea,” “but not that this mode was universally practised or essential to the ordinance of Baptism.”—“He expressly approves of sprinkling as valid Baptism.”

Beza says, “they are rightly baptized, who are baptized by sprinkling.”

J. Wickliff says, “it matters not whether they were dipped once or three times, or whether water were poured upon their heads.”—“That every one might act according to the custom of the place.”—“He did not believe that total immersion was necessary.”

Dr. Hammond no where says, that *Baptismus* signifies immersion and nothing else.” “He viewed it as extending to other modes of washing.”—“He never held that all modes of baptizing, except by immersion, were unlawful and invalid.”

Dr. Gill, a Baptist, tells us, “that the native and proper signification of the original word baptizō, is to dip into water, or to plunge under water;” and Casaubon, Bulinger, and Zanchy, are cited, from Leigh’s *Critica Sacra*, as agreeing to this opinion;

but he withholds from us what that critical author had previously observed, viz. “ Al-
 “ though the word *baptize*, be derived from
 “ *bapto, tingo*, to *dip*, or plunge into the wa-
 “ ter, and signifies, primarily, such a kind of
 “ washing as is used in bucks, where linnen
 “ is plunged and dipped ; yet it is taken,
 “ more largely, for *any* kind of washing, rin-
 “ sing or cleansing, even where there is no
 “ dipping at all ;” and quotes Dr. Featly, as
 saying, “ Christ no where requireth dipping,
 “ but only baptizing ; which word (Hesy-
 “ chius, Stephanus, Scapula, and Budæus,
 “ those great masters of the Greek tongue,
 “ make good by very many instances and al-
 “ legations, out of the classic writers.) im-
 “ porteth no more than ablution, or washing.”

“ Whitaker says, the word *baptizō*, signi-
 “ fies not only to dip, but also to tinge or
 “ wet.”

“ Lightfoot says, the word Baptism, does
 “ not always denote immersion, but some-
 “ times washing only, or even sprinkling.”

“ Maastricht says, it signifies washing either
 “ by sprinkling or dipping.”

The same opinion has been sincerely em-
 braced and well defended by many of the
 most learned and eminent divines of our own
 nation, viz. the Rev. Peter Clark, Dr. Mo-
 ses Hemmenway, Dr. Samuel Hopkins, Dr.
 Joseph Lahrop, and others ; whose abilities
 and characters are extensively known and
 universally esteemed, and whose writings may

be easily obtained, by any person who wishes to read them.

Dr. Hopkins expressly observes, “ that
 “ the mode of Baptism, and the form and
 “ manner of applying and using water, in this
 “ ordinance, does not appear to be decided-
 “ ly fixed in scripture.”—“ That plunging,
 “ pouring, and sprinkling, have been embra-
 “ ced and practised by different churches.”
 “ That when the scriptures are carefully ex-
 “ amined, it will *not* appear that plunging
 “ was instituted by Christ, or practised by
 “ the Apostles; or that the original word,
 “ translated Baptism, or to baptize, invaria-
 “ bly signifies plunging the whole body under
 “ water.”—This he says, “ has been partic-
 “ ularly considered and proved, over and o-
 “ ver again, by writers upon the subject.
 “ Therefore, their opinion and practice seem
 “ most agreeable to scripture, who think no
 “ particular form of applying water in Bap-
 “ tism is there prescribed, either by precept
 “ or example, or by any thing said on this
 “ point.”—“ Consequently, every church is
 “ left to adopt that particular mode which
 “ appears to them most decent and conveni-
 “ ent; or, that different persons may be re-
 “ ally baptized, by the application of water,
 “ in different ways, &c.

Dr. Wall, in the appendix of his reply to Dr. Gale, mentions a remarkable instance, in which the mode of wetting or of applying water was certainly that of pouring

and not that of dipping. It is as follows:—
 St. Origen, when commenting on the Baptism of John, enquires thus of the Pharisees;
 “how could you think that Elias, when he
 “should come, would *baptize*, who did not
 “in Ahab’s time *baptize* the wood upon the
 “altar, which was to be washed before it was
 “burnt by the Lord’s appearing in fire? But
 “he ordered the priests to do that; not once
 “only, but he says, do it the second time;
 “and they did it the second time: And do
 “it the third time; and they did it the third
 “time. Therefore, how could it be likely
 “that this man, who did not then *baptize*,
 “but assigned that work to others, would
 “himself *baptize*, when he should, according
 “to the prophecy of Malachi, again appear
 “here on earth?”

We find in the first book of Kings, xviii. 33, that the order given by Elijah was to fill four barrels with water, and *pour* it on the wood and on the burnt offering. This *pouring of water*, Origen, that accurate scholar, who lived in the second century, and was well acquainted with the Greek classics, and Greek Testament, calls baptizing. In the very same sentence, he makes use of the Greek word *Baptizō* four times; twice with express reference to the *Baptism* of John; and twice with express reference to that *Baptism* which took place in the days of the Prophet Elijah; which Baptism, we are expressly told, was not performed by *dipping*

the wood and sacrifice into water, but by *pouring* water upon them.

It is also evident, even from the frequent use of the word baptizō, by heathen authors, that it does not always signify a total immersion. Mr. Walker tells us, “that Porphyrie mentions a river in India, into which
“ if an offender enters, or attempts to pass
“ through it, he is immediately *baptized* up to
“ his head;” (*baptizetai mechri Kēphalēs.*) Here a person is said to be baptized, although his head did not go under, but remained above the water. This certainly was not a total immersion.

“ He also instances a case from Mr. Sydenham, as delivered by the oracle (viz. *askos baptizē, dunai dē toi ou themis esti.*”) In which instance, if *dunai* signifies to plunge wholly under water, as it certainly does, then *baptizē* must signify something less than a total immersion. “ *Baptize him as a bottle, but it is not
“ lawful to plunge him wholly under the water.*” The baptism here described, resembles that of a blown bladder or bottle of leather, which when put into the water, will not sink to the bottom, but swim upon the top.

The same critical author mentions an instance from Schrevelius’ and Robertson’s Lexicons, 19th chapter, in which case, the primitive word *baptō* signifies a wetting with water, that was certainly less, and very different from a total dipping or immersion. The sentence is this; (“ *Baptei men askon,*

“ *udôr dè ugròn dunci pòte.*) He indeed baptizeth
 “ a bladder or bottle, but it never goeth under the
 “ liquid water.”

To these instances, we might add a well known case, taken from a poem attributed to Homer, called the battle of the frogs and the mice, in which the lake is said to be *baptized* by the blood of a frog. (*Ebapteto de aimai limnē porphurcō.*) This lake was not *dipped* into the blood of a frog; it was only *bespattered* and tinged therewith.

We could easily multiply authorities if it were necessary. It appears undeniably evident from the Greek classicks, and from learned writers and commentators, both ancient and modern, that the word *baptizō* has other significations besides that of a total dipping or immersion.

The most celebrated and respectable Lexicographers and criticks have often translated *baptizō* into the following Latin words, viz. *baptizo, mergo, immergo, tingo, intingo, lavo, abluo, madefacio, purgo, mundo.* No one, I presume, will pretend that all these words are mentioned as being perfectly synonymous—of the same meaning exactly. And certainly if the word *baptizō* signify any thing less or different from a total immersion, then persons may be baptized in some other mode.

Besides, if it had been the intention of Christ and of his Apostles, to specify the mode, or to have restricted all christians to one and the same mode of baptizing, they

might, for this purpose, have selected from the Greek language words of the most unequivocal and definitive signification. If it had been their intention to specify the mode of *sprinkling*, they might have used the word *Rantizō*; if the mode of *pouring*, they might have used the word *Ekcheō*; if that mode of *bathing* or *washing*, which is performed by the application of water with friction or rubbing, they might have used the word *Louō*; and if it had been their intention to specify the mode of *dipping*, they might have used the word *Duptō* or *Dunō*, &c.

I am sensible it has been objected, that the word *dunō*, signifies such a kind of plunging, as drowns or destroys the person; but this is a mere evasion. The idea of being suffocated or destroyed, is not implied in the meaning of *dunō*. This word may be applied, for it is strictly applicable, even to those creatures and things which are not liable to suffocation, or to any disadvantage, from being plunged into or under the water. And as to the word *dupto*, it certainly signifies *to dip* or *plunge*, exclusively and unequivocally; and without being suspected of having any thing else, frightful in its signification. This is what Mr. Booth himself seems to admit. But the inspired writers, when treating of the Christian Baptism, have not restricted us to any one particular mode, exclusive of all others, by using a word that is decided and limited in its import.

I will conclude these remarks with the following very pertinent and applicable quotation, from Mr. John Horsey's defence of infant Baptism, viz. "That Baptism is an equivocal, open, general term"—"that nothing is determined by it further than this, that water should be applied to the subject, in some form or other"—"that the mode of use is only the ceremonial part of a positive institute; just as in the supper of our Lord, the time of day, the number and posture of communicants, the quality and quantity of bread and wine, are circumstances not accounted essential, by any party of Christians.—That *sprinkling*, *pouring*, and *plunging*, are perfectly equivalent and equally valid."

The aforesaid authorities have been mentioned in preference to a host of others, because they were, generally, the very same persons who had been named by you or Mr. Booth, as the most learned and respectable authors. And it appears, from their express testimony that they did not believe the mode of dipping was essential to the Christian Baptism; but that persons might be baptized lawfully and validly, and according to the real intent and meaning of the original words *baptizo*, and *baptisma*, by having water poured or sprinkled upon them, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XI.

SIR,

I AM sensible it is pretended by some, “that the native, primary, and only proper meaning of the word Baptism, is dipping” —That it only signifies washing or wetting, consequentially and improperly;—and that it is only such a wetting or washing as supposes, and is affected by dipping;—and that the primary and radical sense is to be preferred to the one, which is secondary and consequential.”

But, Sir, we have no certainty that dipping is the primary and native signification of the Greek word *baptizō*; and that washing or wetting is a consequential and secondary sense. It is the opinion of Dr. Hemmenway and of other very learned and critical writers, that washing or wetting is the first and original import of Baptism. *Wetting* appears to be the *essential idea*, which is always connected with, and implied in, every true and proper *Water-Baptism*. I shall not, however, contend for a point, which, in my opinion, is of very little importance, in the present dispute. For if we should admit, that to *wet* is not the primary, but secondary meaning, this will afford no proof in favour of dipping, to the exclusion of all other modes of baptizing. To *wet* may have been a very common and proper signification of the word *baptizō*, and

the very same sense, in which the Saviour meant to be understood by his Apostles. That person must be very inattentive to the nature of language, who is capable of believing that the native and primary meaning of words is the only meaning, in which they may be commonly and properly used. The original signification is, by custom, very frequently altered, by being enlarged or restricted. For example, "An infant, primarily, signifies a child unable to speak; but we understand by the word any child that is under the age of discretion."—To bathe, in the primitive sense of the word, seems to imply immersion, and yet it is now commonly used to signify any kind of wetting or washing, either by dipping or pouring, or by applying wet clothes, totally or partially, as may be most suitable and convenient.—The word *Baptist* primarily signified a *Baptizer*, or one who administered the ordinance of *Baptism*, without specifying the mode or the subjects; but it is now commonly used to signify any person who denies infant Baptism, and holds to immersion, as absolutely essential.

If Christ, in the commission which he gave to his Apostles, had used the word *duptō*, instead of *baptizō*; or if he had commanded them to baptize, by *dipping*, then the mode of Baptism would have been decided and fixed. But *baptizō* does not appear to be a word of an unambiguous and uniform mean-

ing. According to the opinion of the most learned and skilful criticks in the Greek language, it admits of various significations, and is not restricted to any one particular mode, in the application and use of water. Their criticisms and testimony are not to be despised and treated with contempt. They serve to reflect some useful light upon the subject. But the witness of inspired writers is of higher and better authority. Scripture is the best interpreter of scripture.

If there be any doubt or uncertainty, with respect to the meaning of scripture words and phrases, we must compare them with other places, where the same or similar expressions and passages are used, and the same subjects treated of, perhaps in plainer language, and in a more intelligible and explicit manner. Thus the word *baptize*, is to be compared and explained.

But, although the scriptures were originally written in the Hebrew and Greek languages, by inspiration, our translators were not inspired. Some words are not exactly translated; and some words are of such a nature, that it is difficult to translate them, exactly, into another language, without circumlocution.

The word *baptize*, is borrowed from the Greeks. Our translators, as has been observed, instead of attempting to translate it, as in other cases, have commonly transcribed the original word. It therefore becomes pe-

cularly necessary, in the present case, for us to examine the original texts. But, before we proceed, let it be premised, that I shall, for the sake of the English reader, who is unacquainted with the manner in which Greek words are varied in their terminations, commonly mention *nouns* in the *nominative* case of the singular number, and *verbs*, in the *first person* of the indicative mood, present tense.

When Christ commissioned his disciples to preach the gospel, and instituted the Christian Baptism, he commanded them to baptize. Let us then search the scriptures, not after the primary or secondary meaning of *Baptizō*, but in order to ascertain the sense or senses, in which the Apostles understood and used the word.

The word *baptizō*, is derived from *baptō*, as its theme. Both these words are frequently mentioned by the inspired writers, and they both merit, on this occasion, our particular attention and impartial consideration.

The word *baptō* is used six times in the new Testament; and, according to Dr. Gale, whose statement, I believe, is correct, “it is used nineteen times in the Septuagint translation of the old Testament, and in every instance, except one, it signifies *to dip*.”

1st. Matthew xxvi—23. “He that *dippeth* his hand with me in the dish.”

2d. Mark xiv—20. “It is one of the twelve that *dippeth* with me in the dish.”

3d. Luke xvi—24. “Send Lazarus that he may *dip* the tip of his finger in water.”

4th. John xiii—26. “He it is, to whom I shall give the sop when I have *dipped* it.”

5th. “And when he had *dipped* the sop he gave it to Judas Iscariot.”

6th. Rev. xix—13. “And he was clothed with a vesture, *dipped* in blood.”

In all these instances of dipping, the original word made use of by the Apostles, is *baptō*. The same word is used, in the old Testament, where we read of *dipping* hyssop in water—of *dipping* a cloth in water—of *dipping* a morsel in vinegar—of *dipping* a bunch of hyssop in blood, &c. Now, it is evident, that in all these instances, the mode of wetting was not that of sprinkling, or pouring, but that of *dipping*. This fact is ascertained, not by finding the primary meaning of *baptō*, in a lexicon, but from the nature and circumstances of each particular case, as mentioned in the scriptures.

Thus it appears, that in all those places, in the old and new Testament, in which the mode of wetting was *certainly* and *unquestionably* that of dipping, the Prophets and Apostles have invariably used the word *baptō*.

From hence the Baptists infer, that *baptizō* also, must always signify *to dip*;—that if *baptō*, the *primitive*, the *genus*, as they sometimes term it, signify to dip, according to the most common use of the word, then *baptizō*, a *derivative*, a *species*, must of course be consider-

ed as being exclusively used in the same sense. But, Sir, is this inference grammatical and just? or rather, is it not absurd and ridiculous? Does it not entirely confound and annihilate the distinction between the primitive and derivative—the genus and species, and render the words *baptō* and *baptizō*, perfectly synonymous, even in their constant, or most common and proper signification?

Permit me to enquire further. If *baptizō*, when mentioned in scripture, always signify to dip, as has been pretended, is it not very strange and unaccountable, that this word should never have been *once* used in any of those afore said cases, where the *mode of dipping* was certainly and indisputably meant? Besides, if the *mode of dipping* be absolutely essential to the Christian Baptism, as you pretend, is it not equally strange and unaccountable, that the *primitive* word *baptō*, should never have been *once* used with reference to this ordinance?

It would not be improper to say, that the root includes the branches; that the genus includes all its different species; and that the primitive word includes all the words derived from it. But it would be very incorrect, to infer that a certain branch included the root, and all the other branches—that a particular species, included the genus, and all its other various species; or that a derivative, included the primitive word, and all the other words derived from it.

Baptō is the primitive word, and we have shown from customary usage in the sacred scriptures, that it most commonly signifies to dip. *Baptizō* is its derivative, terminating in *zō*, and therefore, according to grammarians, is a *deminutive*, and frequently used to express a mode of wetting, less than total immersion or dipping.

This inference is fairly drawn from the *etymology* of the word, and it will appear still more evident, when we shall attend to those several places in the New Testament, where *baptizō* is used by the Apostles.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

SIR,

IT is well known, that the word *Bible*, now signifies, and is, by common consent and usage, *restricted* in its signification, to the *Book* of Inspiration. The word *scripture* is also now applicable *solely* to the *writings* of inspired men. But, as these words originally signified, and were applied to any other book or writing whatsoever, so the original words *baptize* and *baptism*, which are now appropriated exclusively to a christian ordinance, formerly signified, and were frequently used, even by the Apostles, to express other wet-

tings and washings of various kinds. This appears, not from the English Testament, but from the original Greek. For example. The washing of hands—the washing of household utensils and furniture—and the various washings and purifications of the Jews, are sometimes expressed in the Greek Testament, by the words *baptizō* and *baptismos*. These washings, in the original language, are styled *baptisms*; and undoubtedly the modes of applying and using water in baptizing, or washing these different articles, were as various formerly, as they are at the present day.

It is said in the 7th chapter of Mark, “ that
 “ the Pharisees, when they saw some of his
 “ disciples eat bread with defiled (that is to
 “ say, with *unwashed*) hands, they found fault ;
 “ for the Pharisees and all the Jews, except
 “ they wash their hands oft, eat not ; and
 “ when they come from the market, except
 “ they *wash* (in the original, except they are
 “ *baptized*) they eat not.” It is also said in
 Luke, xi. 37, “ that a certain Pharisee asked
 “ Jesus to dine with him. And he went in
 “ and sat down to meat. And when the Phari-
 “ see saw it, he marveled that he had not first
 “ *washed* before dinner.” The same word is
 made use of in the original, which has been
 noticed in the preceding passage. “ The
 “ Pharisee marveled that he had not been
 “ *baptized* before dinner.”

I am sensible that you, and some other Baptist writers, pretend, “ that the *baptism* or

“ *washing* here referred to, was performed by
 “ bathing or by dipping the whole body into
 “ water, and that this was the mode, in which
 “ the Jews were *baptized* or washed, especially
 “ when they came from the market, as they
 “ were then supposed to be more than ordi-
 “ narily defiled.”

But, Sir, this pretence proves nothing, unless it be the great straits and difficulties, to which the Baptists are reduced, in attempting to defend their principles. It is not intimated that our Saviour or his disciples had been to, or that they came from the market; nor is it any where said or intimated, in the old or new Testament, that the Jews did practise bathing, or dipping their whole bodies into water, before they dined, or eat bread. Besides, a practice of this kind would have been, in many instances, very inconvenient, and even impracticable.

Dr. Pococke, that very learned divine, has shown clearly, from the writings of Maimonides and other Rabbies, that the Jews never had such a custom. But they used to wash their hands; and he expressly tells us, that the mode of washing, was by having water drawn or poured upon them. This account agrees with what is said in 2 Kings iii. 11, *Elisha poured water upon the hands of Elijah*. It also agrees well with the *original word*, which is not used in the active, but in the *passive* voice; a circumstance, which seems to indicate that the water was applied to their

hands by some other person; or else that it was drawn out upon them, by means of some contrivance, provided for that purpose.

This opinion is further corroborated by the form and construction of those water pots which were made for the purposes of their various purifications.—We are told, “there were set at a certain marriage in Cana of Galilee, six water pots, according to the manner of the *purifying* of the Jews.” These water-pots being filled with water, which was afterward in a miraculous manner turned into wine by our Saviour, he ordered them to draw it off, and bear it to the governour. He did not direct them to dip it out, but to draw it off. These large pots or pitchers were not intended as baths, to plunge or bathe the whole body in, but for the customary washings and purifications of the Jews; and in particular, for the purpose of washing their hands; and perhaps occasionally their faces and their feet; and it seems these pots were provided with cocks, or with some suitable contrivance, in order to draw or pour off the water upon their hands, or into some smaller vessel for the common uses of purifying.

The learned compilers of the Dictionary of Bible, inform us, “that the Hebrews had an infinite number of purifications. For example, they did not so much as eat, nor even sit down to a table, till after they had

“ washed their hands, by *pouring water* from their fingers’ ends up to their elbows.”

The pharisees did not find fault with the disciples, and marvel at the Saviour, because they refused to dip themselves, or to be dipped all over under water, before dinner; it was because they neglected to be baptized—neglected to wash their hands. *For the pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not.* Accordingly, in the language of the new Testament, a man is said to be baptized, when only a small part of his body is washed.

It is also observable, that the word (*baptizō*) is further explained by another Greek word (*niptō*) which is here used in the same sense, and is certainly restricted, in its signification, to the washing of the hands. It therefore appears, that those persons, who were thus washed, by dipping their hands into water, or by having water poured upon their hands, agreeably to the Jewish custom, are said, in the original, to be baptized; which plainly shows, that the Greek word *baptizō*, as used in this place by the Apostles, does not signify to immerse or plunge the whole body under water.

Saint Mark further observes, “ that many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washings (in the original it is *Baptisms*) of cups and pots, and brazen vessels and tables.” These superstitious washings are twice expressed by the

Greek word (Baptismous) Baptisms. But we have no evidence that these washings were performed by dipping.

The small *cups* might probably have been dipped, partly or wholly under water; but it would be very inconvenient, and even improper, to wash large pots and kettles, or brazen vessels and tables, in this way. The common method of washing such articles, in all ages and countries, has been, and still is, by pouring water into or upon them, and by making use of friction, rubbing them with the hand or with a wet cloth.

St. Mark and St. Luke have informed us, “that the pharisees and all the Jews were very careful to be baptized, before they dined, and when they came from the market;” and as careful to have their household utensils baptized; but they have not told us in what manner these Baptisms were performed. The mode was probably various. And as our translators have *transcribed* the original word, whenever it had reference to the ordinance of the *Christian Baptism*, so on the present occasion, they have, *very properly translated* it into the English word, *washing*, which is equally indefinite; for it is not restricted, in its signification, to any one method of applying and using water, but is strictly applicable to aspersion, affusion, or immersion.

As this argument is of considerable weight, we will now see how you and other Bap-

list writers have considered and explained the aforesaid passages of scripture. You tell us, that those *baptisms*, viz. “*ebaptisthē*, in Luke, and *baptismous*, in Mark, have reference to, and mean a ceremonial, a religious, or rather, as may be more properly called in these instances, a superstitious washing;” and then say, that “what is meant by a ceremonial washing, may be seen by looking into the ceremonial law.”

But, Sir, we wish to know what is meant by those washings, which you have justly styled *superstitious*. It appears to me very strange and unaccountable, that you and Dr. Gale should refer your readers to the law of Moses, in order to prove in what manner the Jews performed certain *baptisms* or washings, which the law of Moses had never required.

The Saviour says, with express reference to these washings, that the Jews, *laying aside the commandments of God, held to the traditions of men*; and yet you and Dr. Gale have pointed us to a divine institution, in order to show how that superstitious people washed themselves, their hands, their brazen vessels, tables, &c.

These *baptisms*, or washings, were evidently unauthorized. The passages which you and Dr. Gale have quoted are therefore totally inapplicable. We will not, however, pass them over entirely unnoticed.

Your first quotation is taken from Num. xix. 19. “And the clean person shall *sprinkle*

“ upon the unclean on the third day, and on
 “ the seventh day; and on the seventh day
 “ he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes,
 “ and shall *bathe* himself in water, and shall
 “ be clean at even.” This purification was
 appointed for those persons who had been
 polluted by touching a dead body, or some
 unclean thing.

The very text that you have cited, enjoins
sprinkling as well as bathing; and if you had
 looked into the verses immediately preceding
 and succeeding it, you would have found
sprinkling repeatedly and expressly required,
 as being absolutely essential to their purifica-
 tion. The words of Moses are as follow—
 “ and a clean person shall take hyssop and dip
 “ it in the water, and shall *sprinkle* it upon the
 “ tent, and upon *all the vessels*, and upon *all*
 “ *the persons* that are there. But the man
 “ who shall be unclean, and shall not purify
 “ himself, that soul shall be cut off from
 “ among the congregation, because he hath
 “ defiled the sanctuary of the Lord; the
 “ *water of separation hath not been sprinkled*
 “ *upon him, he is unclean.*”

According to the aforesaid representation,
 we find two modes of purifying expressly
 enjoined, viz. bathing and sprinkling. We
 also find two distinct persons expressly men-
 tioned. One of these persons was to be the
 subject of purification, by sprinkling, and the
 other, by bathing; but it does not appear,
 that the same person was to be both sprink-

led and bathed. *The unclean person was to be cleansed by sprinkling, or if he continued unclean, to be denounced and cut off, for neglecting to have had the water of separation sprinkled upon him.* He is not blamed and condemned for neglecting any other rite, for no other rite was prescribed. But *the clean person, who performed this service of sprinkling the unclean, is supposed to have contracted some degree of ceremonial pollution.* He shall therefore, “on the seventh day purify himself, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.” Thus, that person, who should sprinkle the unclean, was required, on the seventh day, to *purify and bathe himself.* This opinion is fully confirmed in the 21st verse, where a part of the same law is recapitulated, in order to show that it was of a permanent nature. “And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he who *sprinkleth* the water of separation shall wash his clothes, and he that *toucheth* the water of separation shall be unclean until even.” I have made these remarks, in order to correct a mistake of Dr. Gill, who seems to imagine that nothing could have been done effectually, even under the law of Moses, without *bathing*, which he sometimes very improperly calls *dipping*.

The other passage, cited by Dr. Gale and yourself, relates particularly and exclusively to those cases, in which vessels of a certain description should happen to be *defiled by the*

carcase of a mouse, or of some unclean animal. As in Levit. xi—32. “And upon whatsoever any of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean; whether it be any vessel of *wood*, or *raiment*, or *skin*, or *sack*, whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it shall be put into water, and be unclean until the even.” The vessels here specified, were made of *wood*, or *raiment*, or *skin*, or *sack*; and although it be further added, “whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done,” we must still consider it, as formed of the *aforsaid* or of *similar materials*; for all *earthen* vessels, we are informed in the very next verse, were to be *broken*; but if made of different materials, they were to pass through the fire, as appears from Numb. xxxi—21, 22, 23. viz. “This is the ordinance of the law, which the Lord commanded Moses. Only the *gold*, the *silver*, the *brass*, the *iron*, the *tin*, and the *lead*; every thing that may *abide* the *fire* ye shall make go through the fire, and it shall be clean; nevertheless it shall be *purified* by the *water of separation*.” This water of separation was always applied by *sprinkling*.

Thus, Sir, you seem destined to argue against yourself; for *brazen vessel*, and *pots*, and *cups*, that were made of *iron*, or of any *hard materials* or *mettle*, that would *endure* the *fire*, were not to be *cleansed* by being *put into the water*; but by having the *water of separation* *sprinkled upon them*. This “water was to be *sprinkled*

“ upon their *tents*, and upon all the *persons* therein, and upon all the *vessels* ;” but with respect to *tables* and *benches*, the law of Moses is silent.

Dr. Lathrop, in his Treatise on Baptism, page 6, first edition, tells us, that “ the Jews, “ by divine appointment, observed divers “ kinds of purifications, the greater part of “ which were sprinklings. And these are “ expressly called *Baptisms*. The Apostle, in “ the 9th chapter to the Hebrews, 10th verse, “ speaking of the *Jewish* ritual, says, *it stood “ only in meats, and drinks, and diverse washings.* “ (Greek, *diaphorais baptismois*, diverse *bap- “ tisms*.) By these diverse *Baptisms*, he plain- “ ly means the various ceremonies of sprink- “ ling ; for so he explains them in the fol- “ lowing verses. The blood of bulls and of “ goats, and *the ashes of an heifer* sprinkling “ *the unclean, sanctifyeth to the purifying of the “ flesh.* *Moses took the blood of calves and goats “ with water—and sprinkled the book and all “ the people. He sprinkled likewise with blood, “ both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the “ ministry.* And almost all things are, by the “ law, purged with blood, i. e. with the *sprink- “ ling* of blood. Now, as the Apostle speaks “ of diverse *baptisms*, and then immediately “ illustrates them by diverse *sprinklings*, and “ mentions no other purifications but *sprink- “ lings*, as instances of these diverse *baptisms*, “ it is evident that, if the sacred writer un- “ derstood Greek, sprinkling is baptism.”

To these and similar remarks, you reply. "It is not a little surprizing, that a man of Mr. Cleaveland's good sense should say, and that Dr. Lathrop, and other men of erudition, should follow him, in saying, these different sprinklings in the 13th and 21st verses refer to *Baptismois*, when, had they looked three words further, they would have found them to be, *kai dikaiomasi sarkos*, the literal English of which is, "the ordinances of God concerning the ceremonial rites of bloody sacrifices." This you call "literal English"—two Greek words translated into eleven English words—which appear to me more like an exposition of the original words, than like a literal translation.

What you call "bloody sacrifices," were those offered victims, whose blood or ashes were mingled with water, and then *sprinkled upon the book and all the people—upon the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry, &c.* But you tell us, "that the Apostle makes use of the word *sprinkled*, when speaking of the application of blood; and speaking of the unclean, says, they are *rantized*, and adds, almost all things are by the law purged, *catherized*, not baptized with blood."

If there be any weight in these remarks, it is beyond my apprehension. They seem to me more like *ranting* than like reasoning.

Sprinkling expresses the *mode*, in which those unclean persons and things were *baptized*; and *purification* the *effect* of their *bap-*

tism. Almost all things under the law were purged from their ceremonial pollutions, by being sprinkled—baptized with blood.

It evidently appears, that purifications by sprinkling were intended by those *diverse baptisms*. For the Apostle observes, with particular reference to these *baptisms*, and as an explanation of what he meant by them, “if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifyeth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, &c. purge your consciences, &c?” which plainly shows that these *purifications* by sprinkling were remarkable instances of those very *Baptisms* or washings he had just mentioned.

But you tell us, that these *Baptisms* were *bathings*; and I will venture to add, *sprinklings*; for the Apostle speaks of *diverse Baptisms*, and has plainly told us in what the difference or diversity consisted, both as it respected the objects of *Baptism* and the various liquids and compositions, with which they were sprinkled or baptized.

Under the law of Moses, the *objects* of purification or *Baptism* were very numerous and *diverse*, or *different*, as the word properly signifies. For not only the people, but almost all things were purged, by sprinkling.

The liquid, or compositions, used, were also very different. Sometimes they were sprinkled with blood; sometimes with water, mixed with blood; and sometimes with water,

mixed with the ashes of a sacrificed heifer. This *diversity*, with respect to the objects *sprinkled*, and with respect to the *liquids* with which they were *sprinkled*, plainly shows that these *different sprinklings* were those *diverse Baptisms*, mentioned by the Apostle.

We are ready to admit, that there were two sorts of ceremonial washings among the Jews, *bathing* and *sprinkling*; but if the Apostle, by the word *Baptisms*, had reference to *one* mode, rather than the other, it was certainly *that of sprinkling*; for every instance of legal purification, mentioned in the context, is of this kind. He has not said a single word, concerning *dipping* or *bathing*. It would therefore be perfectly absurd to suppose, as Dr. Gill pretends, “that by these
“different washings, he only intended diffe-
“rent dippings, or the dipping of different
“things.”

Under the Mosaic dispensation, the Apostle tells us, there were *diverse Baptisms*. Under the gospel of Christ, he says, there is but *one Baptism*. Under the law of Moses, the *objects* of Baptism were *numerous* and different—mankind, and a multitude of other things. Under the gospel, there is but *one object*—*the human species*. Under the law, the water made use of was *mingled* with various ingredients—with *blood* and *the ashes of an heifer*, for the purpose of *sprinkling the unclean*. Under the gospel, the water to be applied in Baptism, is *unmixed* and pure.—The prophet Ezekiel,

personating the Saviour, hath predicted this very circumstance.—*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.*

Thus the *diversity* of Baptisms under the law serves to explain and illustrate the simplicity and *oneness* of Baptism, under the Gospel. Those diverse Baptisms were sometimes repeated; but the one Baptism under the gospel does not admit of repetition.

I know that some of the Baptists pretend, that the *one Baptism*, “means one mode of baptizing, to the exclusion of all others; which mode is that of dipping.” But it appears from what has been said, that this was not St. Paul’s meaning.

Baptism, and the *mode* of baptizing, are distinct things. The Apostle does not say there is but *one* mode of baptizing.—There is *only one* Baptism; but there are, undoubtedly, *several* valid modes of administering this ordinance.

Under the law of Moses, two different modes of Baptism, or of sacramental purification, bathing and sprinkling, were particularly pointed out, and expressly enjoined.

Under the gospel of Christ, no particular mode is exclusively specified. “Christ nowhere requires dipping, but only baptizing.”

We have largely proved, that the original word has various significations. It cannot be considered as restricting Christians to any

one particular mode, in the application and use of water, in this religious ordinance.

This *one* Baptism, of which we have been speaking, is the *only* appointed token of regular admission into the visible church of Christ. St. Paul therefore mentions it, and urges it, among other considerations of a similar nature, as a good reason why christians of different opinions should exercise mutual “*forbearance and love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.*” After the same manner, he also reasons in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, 12th chapter. “*Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit—differences of administrations, but the same Lord—diversities of operations, but the same God, which worketh all in all: For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit.*”

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R XIII.

SIR,

IT appears evidently from the preceding letter, that *persons* are said in the *original* to be *baptized*, when only their *hands* were washed, and probably by having water drawn on

poured upon them. It appears also, that the *washings* of household utensils and furniture, such as *brazen vessels and tables*, are styled in the original, *baptisms*. These articles were undoubtedly washed by having water poured into, or upon them; for the mode of dipping would have been very inconvenient and improper. Besides, the law of Moses did not require that such things should be put into the *water*, but that the *water of separation* should be poured or *sprinkled upon them*. It further appears, that the *diverse*, or different purifications of the Jews are called *baptisms* in the Greek Testament; which *baptisms*, according to the Apostle's own account, were generally performed by sprinkling. Indeed, this is the only mode of purifying, or of baptizing, which he has particularly mentioned. We therefore infer, that a total immersion is not essential to the signification of baptism; but that a person or thing may be baptized by pouring or sprinkling, as well as by dipping, according to the original meaning of the word, as used by the inspired writers.

In order to evade the force of the afore-said arguments, "you and the Baptists assert, that those *purifications*, called *baptisms*, were *bathings* and not sprinklings." This however is mere assertion—not even rendered plausible, by any kind of evidence.

We have admitted that the Jewish purifications or baptisms were performed in two

different modes, namely, by affusion and bathing. But it is not said, that these washings or bathings were performed by total immersion. The Jews were not required, in any part of their religious service, to dip or immerse themselves wholly under water, or to be thus totally immersed by any body else.

In some instances, the law of Moses required that individuals should be washed by other persons; and in some cases, that they should bathe themselves; but whether these bathings and washings were total or partial, or in what manner they were performed, no one can determine with absolute certainty. There is however the greatest probability that these bathings were not always total, and that they were performed in a method, as different from the present mode of dipping, as from that of sprinkling.

Those various purifications, by bathing, rinsing, and sprinkling, which we have been considering, appear to have been principally intended for particular cases of occasional and local defilements.

But in addition to these purifications, *God ordered Moses to make a laver of brass, and to place it between the tabernacle and the altar, and to put water therein, for the purposes of publick and official washings; as we find recorded in Exod. xxix. 4, and in Levit. viii. 4—6. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle, and wash them with*

water. *And Moses gathered all the congregation together, at the door of the tabernacle; and brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. He did not dip them into water, but washed them with water.*

The laver was not a concealed bath, but placed in the most conspicuous situation; and this washing was performed on the most publick occasion. We have no reason to think that these persons were washed, by being instantaneously dipped, with their clothes on; and certainly they were not dipped naked. We have no reason to think that Moses washed their whole bodies, but only those parts which, according to the Hebrew custom, were commonly not covered. This laver, which God commanded Moses to make, and to fill with water, we are expressly informed, was placed *between the tabernacle and the altar, for Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and feet thereat, not therein, but thereat, or therefrom, as the original word signifies.* Exod. xxx—19. We also find in the 40th chapter and 31st verse of the same book, *that Moses, and Aaron, and his sons, actually washed their hands and their feet thereat.* This plainly shows, that the laver was not used as a bathing or dipping place, into which their whole bodies were immersed, but as a *publick receptacle* of water, *at which* they washed their hands, &c. The brazen sea and lavers of the temple were evidently intended for similar purposes. The lavers seem more

particularly appropriated to the washing of the sacrifices ; and the brazen sea, to the washing of the priests. As in 2d Chron. iv — 6. “ Such things as they offered for the burnt offerings, they washed in the lavers, but the sea was for the priests to wash *in*.” In the aforecited passages in Exodus, where the law of Moses, respecting this matter, is fully and particularly recited, it appears that the position of the priests, when they washed themselves, was not *in*, but *at* the laver. This circumstance, as we have already noticed, is twice expressed by the word *thereat*. (According to the Septuagint, it is *ex autou*, and in our Latin bibles *ex eo*, which words properly signify, *therefrom*.) It is also evident, that this washing was not total, but partial ; as we find recorded in Exod. xxx — 19, 20, 21, “ And Aaron and his sons shall wash their *hands* and their *feet* *thereat*. “ When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not : and when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord ; so they shall *wash their hands and their feet*, that they die not ; and it shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and his seed, throughout all generations.”

Thus that washing, which, in the very institution, was made absolutely essential, and which was to continue so long as the Levitical Priesthood should last, is *twice* mentioned

as being performed *at the laver*, and *three* times mentioned, as being restricted to the *hands* and *feet*. We must, Sir, believe what Moses has written, notwithstanding all that Dr. Gale and Dr. Gill have said concerning the prodigious magnitude of the molten sea, in which they imagined “the priests were totally immersed.” The place and vessel, at which they now washed, were different; but the parts washed, and the manner of washing them, were undoubtedly the same. More water was needed for the service of the temple, than for the service of the tabernacle. The temple was accordingly furnished with *ten* lavers, and a *sea* made of brass. These capacious vessels served as reservoirs, from which the smaller vessels—the *pots*, the *bowls*, and *basons*, were probably supplied with water, for various washings and sprinklings.

By a very common figure, a part is often put for the whole. A person is said to be washed, when the washing extended only to the hands, or to those parts of the body which are usually naked. Accordingly, the Jewish priests were said to be washed, when the washing extended only to their hands and feet.

We are not particularly informed, by the sacred penman, in what *manner* they washed on these occasions; but learned commentators and historians inform us, that the brazen sea and lavers were provided with cocks, in order to draw out water, for the purpose of

washing their hands and feet, and other occasional uses.

These remarks prepare the way for other observations of greater importance, in the present controversy. I mean that solemn, inaugural purification, or *baptism*, which was administered to Aaron and his sons, by Moses himself.

The washing, we have already considered, was frequently repeated. The Levites were not allowed to approach the altar, or *tread* the sacred floor of God's tabernacle and temple, and *handle* holy things, until they had first washed their *hands* and *feet*. But the washing, which was administered at the time of their inauguration, was not restricted to their hands and feet, nor was it to be repeated.

Moses, we are informed, was expressly ordered to *bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle, and wash them with water*. We are particularly told, that he performed this service; that he actually *assembled the whole congregation*, and in a solemn, publick manner, *washed them with water*.

But, Sir, this washing, or baptism, was undoubtedly performed by sprinkling. We find *sprinkling* explicitly enjoined as the *very mode*, in which the water of purification should be applied, at the time of their consecration. As in the 8th chapter of Numbers, and the 7th verse. The whole chapter has particular reference to the separation, the

consecration, and purification, of the Levites. We are informed that they were not allowed to officiate, until *twenty and five years old and upward*; nor were they permitted to undertake the sacerdotal office, until *purified*, as the law required. Moses is repeatedly and expressly commanded to *cleanse and purify them*; “and thus,” says God, “*thou shalt do unto them to cleanse them: sprinkle water of purifying upon them.*”

In addition to this, they were directed to “*shave all their flesh, and wash their clothes, and make themselves clean*;” and, as we have observed, whenever they were about to approach the altar, or enter the tabernacle, they were required to wash their *hands and feet*. But that washing, or baptism, which Moses administered, and which was the solemn, publick rite, that inaugurated and separated them to the service of the sanctuary, was performed by *sprinkling*. “*Thou shalt cleanse them*, says God, and thus shalt thou “do unto them, to cleanse them; *sprinkle the water of purifying upon them.*”

Our Saviour was undoubtedly baptized in conformity to this precept; and the argument affords very strong, presumptive evidence, that his baptism was administered by sprinkling.

John, at first, appeared to hesitate. “*It becomes us*,” said Christ, “to fulfil *all righteousness.*” He had particular reference to *all the rites* of the Mosaic dispensation. Ac-

cordingly, when *eight days old*, he was *circumcised*. And as soon as the days of his mother's purification were accomplished, according to the law of Moses, being the first born, "they brought him to the temple and presented him to the Lord." When twelve years old, he came with his parents to Jerusalem to observe the passover. And when about thirty years old, he was baptized. Although he descended from the tribe of Judah, and expected to be a priest, after the order of Melchizedek, he would not undertake the sacerdotal office until inaugurated by baptism, as the Levitical law required.

As the Jewish purifications are denominated *baptisms*, by the Apostle, so that *baptism*, which Christ instituted, is properly the *christian purification*. As the word (*Louō*) is commonly made use of in the old Testament by the seventy for bathing or washing, so it is supposed to be sometimes used in the New Testament, for the Christian Baptism; and on this circumstance, you and the Baptist appear to lay much stress, as if it were a very powerful argument in proof of the necessity of total immersion.

We have already shown that the ceremonial washings of the Jews were various; and that they were performed by sprinkling, and bathing, and rubbing with the hand.

The word *Louō*, is generally made use of to express that kind of bathing, or washing, which is performed by friction or rubbing.

But *Louō* is very seldom if ever used for the Christian Baptism. There are but four instances, in which it is pretended that this word is thus used; and in these, it is connected with, and explained by, the word *sprinkling*.

The Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, x. 22, says, “Let us draw near, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” Titus, iii. 5, “He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed,” or poured “on us.”—Eph. v. 26, “That he might sanctify it, having cleansed it (meaning the church) with the washing of water by the word.” 1st Cor. vi. 11, “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.

Now the “Blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin,” is styled the blood of *sprinkling*. The sanctifying influences of God’s spirit are represented as “being shed, or poured out like rain on the mown grass, and like showers that water the earth.” St. Paul tells us, that *sprinkling sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh.*—*Be baptized and wash away your sins.*—*Be baptized for the remission of sins.* This external water baptism very naturally represents the cleansing efficacy of Christ’s blood and spirit; whose blood is said to be sprinkled, and whose spirit is said to be poured out upon us.

We are said to be "*washed* from our sins" "in the blood of Christ;" but the application of his blood is expressed by *sprinkling*. Christians are styled "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and the *sprinkling* of the blood of Christ." "Ye are come to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of *sprinkling*, &c.

I have often heard the Baptist say, with an air of triumph, that *sprinkling* is not washing; and with equal propriety, we might add, that *dipping* is not washing; for who ever supposed any thing washed, by being *only dipped* into water, especially if that thing were, at the same time, *covered* with something else. The usual mode of washing, in order to cleanse any person or thing from dirt and filth, I will venture to say, is as different from the *modern* method of *dipping*, as from that of *sprinkling*. But, Sir, the purification under consideration, is of an external and spiritual nature, and does not depend upon the quantity of water, or manner of applying it. Indeed, the whole ocean would be inadequate. But the *sprinkling* of Christ's blood is sufficient; and the *sprinkling* of water is a sufficient and very suitable symbol to represent his *sprinkled* "blood, which cleanseth from all sin."

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XIV.

SIR,

I FIND the Greek word *baptizō*, but twice used in the Septuagint. The first instance is in the second book of Kings, v. 14. The passage has reference to Naaman's washing himself in Jordan; which washing is four times mentioned in this chapter; once in the command of the Prophet; once in Naaman's refusal; once in the advice of his servant; and once in his actual compliance. In the three first instances, it is expressed by *louō*, and in the last, by *baptizō*. We have already observed, that *louō* has reference to that kind of washing which is commonly performed by rubbing, with a design to make clean the person or thing thus washed. The idea or notion of actual cleansing is therefore radical, and seems essential to the signification of the word *louō*. For example, Moses was directed to *wash* the Levites. This *washing* is afterward expressed by *cleansing*, and the manner in "which he should *cleans*e them was by *sprinkling the water of purifying upon them.*" Thus David prayed in the 51st Psalm, "*wash* me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and *cleans*e me from my sin." Which passage is thus explained, in the seventh verse: "*Purge me*, (or, as it is in the Greek, "*sprinkle me*) with hyssop, and I shall be

“clean; *wash* me, and I shall be whiter than
“snow.”

Naaman was commanded to wash or cleanse himself in or at Jordan; and the manner of cleansing is particularly described in Levit. xiv—7. “And he shall *sprinkle* upon him
“that is to be cleansed from the *leprosy seven*
“*times*, and shall pronounce him *clean*, &c.” Naaman was undoubtedly acquainted with the law of Moses; and expected to be cleansed conformably to the mode of *sprinkling* therein provided; for, we are told, he verily “thought the prophet would come out to
“him—and *strike his hand over the place*, and
“recover the leper.” But the Syrian captain was disappointed, and the disappointment greatly enraged him. Elisha ordered him to go and *wash*, or cleanse *himself*, in *Jordan*; and, we are told, that he finally went, and actually *baptized himself seven times*, according to the saying of the man of God.

The law required, that the leper should be *sprinkled seven times over running water*, which was the reason why he was sent to the river Jordan. Naaman actually *baptized himself seven times*. Is it not very natural to suppose, that he took water in his *hand*, and applied it seven times to his own body, or at least to that *part* which was leprous? For it seems the leprosy was not universal. This is the only instance, in which our translators have used the word *dipped*. In the older English bibles, the place is rendered, *he wash-*

ed himself in Jordan. There is, however, the greatest probability, that Naaman was *sprinkled*; for it is said, in the Septuagint, that he “*baptized himself seven times, according to the saying of the man of God* ;” and we cannot believe that this *man of God* would have ordered a *seven fold dipping*, in a particular case, where the *law of God* expressly required a *seven fold sprinkling*. The other instance occurs in Isaiah xxi—4, and has reference to a sense of God’s anger, which is often represented in the scriptures, as being *poured out* upon a person; but as the word *baptizō* is here used figuratively, I do not consider the passage of much importance in the present dispute.

We have observed that the primitive word *baptō*, as used by the inspired writers, most commonly signifies to *dip*; but yet there is *one* very remarkable instance in the Old Testament, in which its signification is very different from that of dipping or immersion—I have reference to the case of Nebuchadnezzar; where it is said, “*that he was wet with the dew of heaven.*” This instance is the more remarkable, as the word *baptō* is twice mentioned with respect to the very same effect, as you will find in the book of Daniel, 4th chap. 33d verse; and 5th chap. 21st verse.

Dr. Gale and Mr. Booth have told us marvellous stories, about the wonderful great dews, that sometimes fall in those hot eastern

countries, so that poor Nebuchadnezzar, “was, as it were, overwhelmed.” But, Sir, I can see nothing in all this, that even looks like dipping. The fact is, that Nebuchadnezzar was *not dipped* or plunged into the dew of heaven, but the dew *distilled* from heaven, and fell upon him in small and frequent *drops*. He was *sprinkled*, and in that way, *wet—baptized* with its *distillation*. Hence we infer, that as *baptizō* is derived from *baptō* *its theme*, it fairly admits of this same signification. You seem to allow the premises, but deny the consequence; and tell us, “that the argument is of the same weight
“with the following; your father believes
“in sprinkling, as being Baptism; you are
“his offspring, and consequently you be-
“lieve the same; when the fact is, you are
“largely convinced it is no such thing.”

Sir, I am incapable of seeing the analogy between the etymology of a Greek word, and the derivation of a degenerate son, and shall therefore make no reply. But you will permit me to observe, that if *baptō*, the primitive word, sometimes signify *to wet* by *sprinkling*, as it certainly does, then we may fairly and justly conclude, that *baptizō*, its derivative, will also very naturally and commonly signify *to sprinkle*.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XV.

SIR,

THE next argument, which I shall mention, will be deduced from the Baptism of the Israelites, when passing *under* the cloud and *through* the Red Sea. The circumstances and mode of this Baptism are remarkably important, and merit our particular consideration. The importance appears from the very manner in which the Apostle introduces and relates the affair; as you will find in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, x—1, 2. “Moreover, brethren, *I would not that ye should be ignorant*, how that *all* our fathers were under the cloud; and *all* passed through the sea; and were *all baptized* unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.”

Christians of all denominations have admitted, and will admit, that this was a true and proper water Baptism, although extraordinary and miraculous—all will also admit, that the whole congregation, *infants* as well as *adults*, were then *baptized*. The only question therefore, at present, is respecting the mode or manner in which the water was applied. Now, it is plain, that the Israelites were not dipped into the cloud. Inspiration expressly says, they were *under the cloud*—not *in it*.—They were not dipped into the sea, nor did they wade into its waters; for in-

piration expressly says, that they passed through on *dry land*.

Although our translators have made use of the English word *in*, (*in* the cloud, and *in* the sea) yet it is worthy your notice, that the *dative* case in the Greek language, is commonly and properly used instrumentally after the preposition (*en*;) as in Matthew, xii. 27. “If I *by Beelzebub* (*en Beelzeboul*) cast out devils, *by whom* (*en tini*) do your children cast them out?” In this short sentence, the *dative* case, is twice rightly used as the instrument, after the preposition (*n*;) and it might, with the greatest propriety, have been thus translated in the passage we have been considering.

The cloud commonly preceded the Israelites, in order to direct their course. But at the Red Sea, we are told that “it went from before their face, and stood behind them—between their camp, and the camp of the Egyptians.” In thus going from the front to the rear of their encampment, it probably passed over their heads; for St. Paul expressly tells us, that they *all were under the cloud*; and were all baptized by the cloud. They were undoubtedly sprinkled and wet with or by the drops of rain, which descended and fell upon them from the cloud. This construction is the most natural and obvious that can be imagined, and therefore preferable to any other.

To this Baptism, holy David seems to allude in the 68th Psalm. “O God, when

“thou wentest forth before thy people—
 “when thou didst march through the wilder-
 “ness, Selah—the earth shook—the heav-
 “ens, also, *dropped* at the presence of God.—
 “Thou, O God, didst send a *plentiful rain*,
 “whereby thou didst *confirm* thine *inheritance*
 “when it was *weary*.” While they marched
 through the sea, we are told that “the waters
 “were congealed into a heap, and stood as
 “a wall unto them, on the right hand and on
 “the left.” The waters being thus divided,
 the passage was *dry*. It is expressly *said*, in
 four different places, “that the *ground*—that
 “the *land*, on which they *walked*, was *dry*.”
 But *drops* of rain undoubtedly fell upon them
 from the cloud; and *sprays* of water were
 dashed or blown upon them from the surface
 of the sea. This was a *real and literal baptism*,
 administered in the mode of *affusion* or *sprink-
 ling*, and by the unerring hand of God him-
 self.

You have not attempted to explain this
 unpropitious passage. Other Baptist writers
 have tried in vain to prove that the Israelites
 were dipped. Dr. Gill, who was not easily
 worsted, could neither untie nor cut the knot.
 Having done his utmost, all he pretended,
 was a *seeming* immersion. They had the
 waters, he tells us, on each side of them, and
 the cloud over them, so that they *were as per-
 sons immersed*. Speaking of their descent into
 the sea, he says “they *seemed* as though they
 “were buried in the waters of it; and their

“ ascent again out of it on the shore, has a
 “ *great agreement* to baptism by immersion.”
 What strange language! “ *They were as per-*
 “ *sons immersed.*” “ *They seemed, as though*
 “ *they were buried in the waters.*” “ *A great*
 “ *agreement* to baptism by immersion.” Ac-
 cording to the Doctor’s own account, there
 was *no reality* in the case—nothing but mere
 appearance. “ *They seemed as though they were*
 “ *buried in the waters.*—They *seemed* as though
 “ they were baptized.” For you and the
 Bap’tists tell us there can be *no real* baptism,
 without a *real and total* immersion—that it is
 absolutely necessary to have the *whole* body
actually dipped, and *wet*, and *washed thereby*, in
 water. The fact is, Moses and Paul, have
 guarded this important national baptism, with
 such uncommon caution, that we cannot
 very easily evade or misrepresent its mean-
 ing, either with respect to the subjects, or
 mode, in which they were baptized. The
subjects of baptism were the whole nation,
adults and infants; and the *mode* was certainly
 that of *affusion or sprinkling*. As we have
 observed, God sent them a plentiful *rain*,
 whereby he did *confirm* his *inheritance* when
 it was *weary*. These words of the Psalmist
 are remarkably applicable. The Israelites
 being separated from all other nations, for
 religious purposes, are frequently called the
 heritage and *inheritance* of God. Having
 fled in haste from Egypt, and being pursued
 by their enemies, they were undoubtedly

much *fatigued*. Nothing could be more desirable than a refreshing *shower*; especially when we consider their *wearied* condition, in a *hot, dry* country, where it *very seldom* rained. By this *rain*, the Psalmist says, they were *confirmed*. He uses the very same term, which is repeatedly applied by others, and even by himself, to the Abrahamic promise and covenant. “Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; even the covenant which he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and hath *confirmed* the same unto Jacob for a law, and unto Israel, for an *everlasting covenant*.” This is that covenant, which, the Apostle tells us, “was *confirmed* of God in Christ.” It was *confirmed* by the token of circumcision—*confirmed* by the oath of God, and *confirmed* by baptism. The whole nation was baptized. No less than six hundred thousand off five men, besides aged men, women and children, were baptized in a miraculous manner, by God himself.

It is worthy our particular notice, that *baptism*, the ancient *confirmation* of the Abrahamic covenant, has commonly been applied to the Gentile profelytes, even from the days of Moses to the present time. Those Gentiles who embraced the Jewish religion, males and females, together with their infant children, we have abundant reason to believe, were baptized, even before our

Saviour's incarnation; and since that period, the same practice has generally obtained, and is still continued, among professing christians.

Thus this baptism of the Israelites, concerning which the Apostle *is not willing that we should remain ignorant*, is evidently a very important and instructive event. It was typical of the Christian Baptism; and points us, not only to *adults*, but also to *infants*, as the proper *subjects*; and to *sprinkling*, as a proper *mode* of baptizing.

But, Sir, upon *your principles*, this important, national baptism, appears perfectly inexplicable and unintelligible. You cannot say, with St. Paul, that *they all were baptized*, for this would imply *infant baptism*. You cannot say, that even the adults *waded* into the sea, and were *baptized*, according to the Baptist mode of dipping. The Egyptians were overwhelmed; but inspiration expressly says, that the *Israelites* went through on *dry dry land*, and *dry shod*. It is certain they were not dipped. You cannot say that they were *baptized* with *rain* from the cloud, and with *sprays* from the sea; for this would be *affusion* or *sprinkling*. All that you can possibly say is, that it *seemed* like baptism. This manner of expression, however, does not even *seem* to agree with what St. Paul has said. He does not speak of a *seeming*, but of a *real* baptism. He explicitly declares, "that they *all* were " under the cloud, and *all* passed through the

“ sea ; and were *all baptized* in, or rather *by*,
 “ the cloud, and *by* the sea.” His language
 is of the most general and positive nature.

But I can discover nothing, according to
 the baptist principles, that even looks like a
real baptism. A *seeming* immersion or burial,
 without being *wet* in the least degree thereby
 —without having so much as *one drop of water*
 touch them, is neither conformable to the
meaning of the word baptism, nor to any
 mode of baptizing. Dr. Hemenway justly
 observes, “ that if a person could be baptized,
 “ *without being wet*, merely by having water
 “ round him, then, the dry hold of a ship
 “ would answer the purpose, as well as Jor-
 “ dan.”

It is very easy to see where the difficulty,
 on your side of the question, lies. For, if
 it should once be admitted, that the Israel-
 ites were baptized, by being actually wet
 with water, every body would suppose the
 mode was that of affusion or sprinkling. It
 is therefore deemed necessary, by some, to
 suppress the very idea of wetting—an *idea*, or
notion, absolutely *essential to every valid mode of*
baptizing.

We are often told, that *sprinkling* is not
 baptism ; “ that a *few drops of water*, poured
 “ or sprinkled on a person’s face, is a mere
 “ *nullity* ;” that a total wetting and washing,
 by *dipping*, is indispensably requisite, in or-
 der to baptism ; and yet these very people
 seem to believe, that a *whole nation* was bap-

tized, while passing through the sea, by a *seeming immersion*, without being wet at all thereby; without having a single drop of its water touch them.

You will perhaps think, that I have dwelt too long upon this argument. But, Sir, remember, St. Paul considered the baptism of the Israelites, *by the cloud and by the sea*, as an event of great importance, and was very anxious to have it rightly understood.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XVI.

SIR,

LET us now attend to that remarkable expression of our Saviour, Luke xii—50. “*I have a baptism, to be baptized with, and how am I straightened, till it be accomplished!*” As my opinion, relative to this and similar passages, accords with Dr. Hemmenway’s, I shall express it, in his language, he being an authority of great weight. “Christ,” the Dr. says, “here calls his sufferings a baptism. But it seems to me, that commentators have missed the true interpretation of these words. They suppose the baptism here spoken of, is to be taken in a metaphorical, and not in a literal sense. Hence, some have argued in favour of the mode of dip-

“ ping, as most fitly expressive of the suffer-
“ ings of Christ, who was plunged and sunk
“ in anguish and distress. Others argue as
“ well and as fairly in favour of the mode of
“ affusion, as expressive of the pouring out
“ the curse of God, and the vials of his
“ wrath, due to our sins, upon Christ, the
“ atoning sacrifice. Thus people explain
“ the supposed metaphor, according to their
“ different views. But methinks the plain,
“ literal sense is more apt and natural, than
“ either of these far-fetched interpretations.
“ The sacred body of the blessed Jesus was
“ truly and literally baptized. He was wet
“ and bathed in his own tears, and sweat, and
“ blood, while in his agony in the garden,
“ when scourged, and when nailed to the
“ cross. He was baptized and sanctified by
“ the blood of the covenant, Heb. x—29—
“ that is, by his own blood; even as the
“ Jewish high priests were baptized, sanctifi-
“ ed, and consecrated, with water and the
“ blood of beasts, as types of Christ. And
“ accordingly, it was a common expression of
“ the ancient fathers, concerning the martyrs
“ who had shed their blood in bearing wit-
“ nesses to the christian faith; that they were
“ baptized with their own blood. Here is
“ then, I think, an other good proof, that
“ dipping is no ways essential to baptism:
“ For Christ was not dipped, and his martyrs
“ were not dipped, in their bloody baptism;
“ but he was wet, and tinged, and bathed, in

“his own sweat and blood, issuing from his pores and veins.

Our Saviour told the two sons of Zebedee, “that *they should be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with.*” It is worthy our notice, that this prediction was literally fulfilled. These disciples were *literally baptized*, though in different modes; one by affusion, and the other by immersion. James was beheaded, and in that way baptized with the affusion of his own blood. John was carried to Rome, and there plunged into boiling oil, but miraculously preserved from injury, and afterward banished to the isle of Patmos.

Although the sufferings of Christ were all antecedent, and preparatory to his death, yet his sacred body, that sacrifice of himself, which he offered up to God, was also literally *baptized with the blood and water* that issued from his pierced side. St. John informs us, that he was present and a spectator of the scene. He repeatedly mentions it as an event of great importance. He tells us, that “*he saw one of the soldiers pierce his side with a spear, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.*” In his first Epistle, 5th chapter, 6th and 8th verses, he several times alludes to this very event, and observes, “*this is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood.*” He adds further, “*there are three, who bear*

“witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.”

At the time of our Saviour's baptismal inauguration, he was baptized by the Holy Ghost. “The Spirit descended visibly in the form of a dove and lighted upon him, and testified with an audible voice, this is my beloved Son, &c.” And when he had finished his work, and was actually dead, both the blood and the water, with which his body was baptized, exhibited their testimony, in proof of the same truth.

The Apostle expressly tells us, that a will or testament cannot effectually exist, or have any strength, while the testator is alive; but the very moment his death takes place, it is in full force.

Every thing which happened relative to our blessed Saviour, previously to his death, were events under the *old* testament or covenant. The *blood* and *water*, which issued from his side, were events after his death, and therefore under the *new* testament or covenant.

The piercing of our Saviour's side was an event of importance, it being the fulfilment of a remarkable prophecy. The issuing of *blood* and *water*, thus separated, were important events, because they afforded the most publick and certain evidence that he was actually dead. They were also very important, because his death, and his baptism with *blood*, and with *water*, were the antitypes, accomplish-

ment and end, of all those bloody sacrifices, and of all those purifications or *baptisms*, which had been so often, and for so long a time, performed by the *sprinkling* of *mixed blood* and *water*, under the Mosaic dispensation. Thus, the *spirit*, the *water*, and the *blood*, agree in *one point*. These three witnesses unite their testimony, in vindicating the Messiahship of Jesus Christ.

The 9th and 10th chapters to the Hebrews merit our particular attention. “The high
“priest, under the law, did not enter the holy
“place of the temple, without the *blood* of
“sacrifices, which he offered for himself, and
“for the errors of the people, once every
“year (on the great day of expiation.) But
“Christ, not by the *blood* of goats and calves,
“but by his *own blood*, hath entered, *once for*
“*all*, into the holy place not made with
“hands; and hath procured redemption for
“us. For this cause, he is the mediator of
“the *New Testament*. For where a *testament*
“is, there must of necessity be the *death* of
“the *testator*. For a *testament* is of *force* after
“men are *dead*, but has *no strength* at all,
“while the *testator liveth*. Whereupon the
“first *testament* was not dedicated without
“*blood*. For when Moses had spoken every
“precept to all the people, according to the
“law, he took the *blood* of goats and calves,
“with *water*, and scarlet wool, and byssop,
“and *sprinkled* both the book and all the
“people; saying, this is the *blood* of the

“ *testament* which God hath enjoined unto
 “ you. Moreover likewise, he *sprinkled* with
 “ *blood* both the tabernacle and all the vessels
 “ of the ministry ; and almost all things are,
 “ by the law, purged with blood, &c. It
 “ was therefore necessary, that the *patterns* of
 “ things in the heavens, should be *purified*
 “ with *these* ; but the *heavenly things them-*
 “ *selves, with better sacrifices than these,*” &c. &c.

Those various purifications of the Jews, and especially that eminently great and expiatory purification, which was administered by the hand of Moses himself, and afterward by the hand of the high priest, once every year, was performed by the *sprinkling* of *blood* and *water*. These purifications, which were effected by the *sprinkling* of *blood* and *water*, the Apostle expressly calls *baptisms*, as we have largely shown. But Christ, whose *death* was represented and prefigured by all the *Jewish offerings*, and whose *bloody baptism* was typified by all their *baptisms* or *sprinklings* of *blood* and *water*, was himself purified “ with
 “ *better sacrifices than these.*” He was *sprinkled*, was *baptized* with the *blood* and *water* that issued from the *pores* of his own body—from his *nailed hands* and *feet*, and from his *pierced side*. This was emphatically “ the *blood* of
 “ *the new testament and covenant, whereby he was*
 “ *sanctified,*” and consecrated an acceptable sacrifice to God.

We have no disposition to invalidate the mode of baptizing by immersion. The va-

lidity of one particular mode does not nullify, or prove the invalidity of another, as the baptists imagine. Nor is the metaphorical interpretation of Christ's bloody baptism inconsistent with its literal and natural meaning. In the figurative language of the old testament, waters, and floods, or waves, and billows, whether they *come over* a person, or whether he *sinks* into them, are sometimes made use of to express great afflictions and sufferings. Accordingly, David says, Psalm lxix—1, 2, “*The waters are come into my soul ; I sink in deep mire ; I am come into deep waters.*” And in the 42d Psalm, “*As thy waves and billows are gone over me, &c*” By these expressions, the Psalmist had undoubtedly a primary reference to himself. But if it should be supposed, as some baptist writers tell us, “that such passages are also prophetical, and have respect to the last baptismal sufferings of Christ, and therefore favour the mode of baptizing by immersion ;” still there is nothing in this supposition, which disproves, or even appears unfavourable to the mode of affusion or sprinkling ; especially when we consider that great sufferings are frequently represented in the scriptures by *pouring*, as well as by plunging. It is said, in the 22d Psalm, 14th verse, with particular reference to the sufferings of Christ, “*I am poured out like water.*” And in Daniel ix—11, 27. “*The curse is poured out upon us,*” and that “*the consummation is poured upon the*

“*desolate.*” The very same word is here used which the Apostle applies to the crucifixion of Christ. “He was made a *curse* for us, as it is written, *curfed* is every one that hangeth on a tree.”—“The *anger* and *fury* of Almighty God, and *vials* of his wrath, are represented as being *poured* out upon nations and individuals.”

These metaphors are in some respects applicable to the sufferings and baptism of Christ; but the literal sense appears to me much the most natural, significant, and important. Christ, by being *literally* baptized with the *blood* and *water* that issued from his own body, hath *literally* fulfilled, and put an end to, all the bloody rites, sacrifices, and baptisms of the old testament.

Under the new testament, the *baptismal water* is not to be mingled with *blood* or the *ashes* of a sacrificed heifer. All compositions and mixtures are to be laid aside. “I will *sprinkle*,” says Christ, “*clean water* upon you, and you shall be *clean*.”—“So shall he *sprinkle many nations*.”

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R XVII.

SIR,

WE find in the sacred scriptures, that the application and use of water, in a sacramental sense, and the communication of divine influences, are both denominated Baptisms. Let us then attend to this spiritual Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and see if it will not reflect some useful light upon that literal Baptism, which is administered by the application of water.

I perceive that you, like the other Baptist writers, have turned your attention wholly to the ever memorable day of Pentecost; and seem to imagine that the affusions of God's Spirit, on that particular occasion, were so plentiful, as to favour the mode of dipping.

You observe, Serm. 4, page 62; "Here was truly a wonderful instance of Christ's baptizing with the Holy Ghost."

"Here 1. All the house was filled with the sound, wind or spirit from heaven. 2. Cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 3. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

"We here see that they were all overwhelmed; for all the house where they were sitting, was filled; and not only were they all overwhelmed, but they were also filled."

“ It is left for you to determine, what be-
 “ comes of Mr. Cleaveland’s argument, upon
 “ which he lays so much stress, and of which
 “ he speaks with so much confidence, and
 “ not unfrequently with an air of triumph,
 “ &c.”

Thus, Sir, you appear to boast a little on the occasion, as if your observations relative to this spiritual Baptism, were unanswerable and conclusive. But let us examine them.

In the first place you tell us, “ that all the
 “ house was filled with the sound, wind or
 “ spirit, from heaven.” *Sound, wind, spirit*—
 These three words, or at least two of them, are mentioned by you as if they were perfectly synonymous; which is very different from the sense in which St. Luke used them. He does not say that the house was *filled with* wind, nor even intimate that there was any wind at all in it.—He does not say that the house was *filled with* the spirit. He only meant to inform us, that it was filled with an unusual, astonishing *sound, resembling the noise of a mighty rushing wind*. So that your *overwhelming* was an immersion into a mere *sound*. It is however true, that the whole house was actually filled with the Spirit of God; and you might with the same propriety have told us, that his Omnipresent Spirit pervaded the immensity of space; that his essential presence equally filled all houses—all persons—and all things; and that being thus filled and

surrounded with Deity, we all are constantly and totally overwhelmed and immersed.

But the sacred historian was not speaking concerning the essential presence of God. He was only relating those miraculous operations and effects of the Spirit, which were then peculiar to that particular time and place. The sound was *audible* in every part of the house. They all heard it with their ears. The appearance was *visible*. They saw it with their eyes. This appearance assumed a visible *form*, resembling that of *cloven tongues of fire*. The exact size of these tongues is not mentioned, but the appearance was so small, that it sat distinctly upon each one of the Apostles. They are said to be *filled with the Holy Ghost*. They were influenced in an *extraordinary* manner, and enabled to speak in *various* languages, *as the Spirit gave them utterance*. The Apostles were not dipped. The Holy Spirit assumed a visible shape; and that visible shape, like a fiery flame, came down from heaven, and sat visibly upon each individual, undoubtedly upon his head.

I perceive that you have adopted a language, similar to that of Dr. Gill and Mr. Booth. Whenever persons are baptized by an *affusion* of dew, or rain, or of the *Holy Spirit*, it is of course thought to be so abundant, as to “look considerably like immersion.” But, Sir, after all that has been said, there is an important difference, between a “*seeming immersion*,” and a *real affusion*.

There is another thing which I have frequently noted. Formerly, the baptists, with whom I have been acquainted, commonly used the word *dipping*; after a while, they introduced *plunging*; then, *immersion*; and latterly, *overwhelming*, which is evidently a word of very indefinite meaning, and as different in its signification from *dipping*, as it is from *pouring*.

You could not say that the Apostles were *dipped* into the Holy Ghost. This language would have been intolerably uncouth. You therefore tell us, that they were *overwhelmed*. I suppose you mean by a plentiful *affusion*. Let us examine this matter a little further, and see how the sacred scriptures explain it.

Baptism, by water, is an emblem of baptism by the Holy Spirit. The inspired writers have therefore repeatedly associated these baptisms, even in the same sentence, as if they were nearly related. John, the Baptist, expressly declares, as in Matt. iii—11. Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. John i. 33. “I, indeed, *baptize you with water*, but he shall baptize *you with the Holy Ghost*.” St. Matthew and Luke have both added the word *fire*. “He shall *baptize you with the Holy Ghost*, and *with fire*.” This remarkable prediction is mentioned by each of the four Evangelists: And in the *Acts* of the Apostles, it is twice applied, by Christ himself, to the *pouring out* of God’s Spirit; as in the 1st chapter and 5th verse. “For John truly *baptized*

“ *with water* ; but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost*, not many days hence.” And in the 11th chapter, 16th verse—“ Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, *John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*” In the original language, the Greek words are *en udati*, with water ; *en pneumati agiō*, with the Holy Ghost ; *kai puri*, and with fire. These words are correctly translated. I have already observed, that the dative case, in the Greek language, when it follows and is governed by the preposition *en*, is commonly and properly used instrumentally. The *water*, the *Holy Ghost*, and the *fire*, are accordingly mentioned as the *instruments*, by which they were baptized. This criticism is just and important ; and it serves to elucidate the mode or manner, in which baptism was administered.

It would be proper to say, I sprinkle you *with water* ; or, I baptize you *with water*, by affusion. But it would be improper to say, I *dip* you *with water* ; and just as improper, to say, I baptize you *with water*, if the mode of baptizing were that of *dipping*. If a person be *plunged* or *dipped*, he is then baptized *in water*. But if a person be *sprinkled*, or has the baptismal element *applied to him* in any mode whatsoever, he is then baptized *by* or *with water*. And thus, when persons are said to be baptized *with the Holy Ghost*, the expression has particular reference to the *affu-*

tion or pouring out of God's Spirit. For this is the *mode*, according to scripture language, by which his influences are *communicated* to mankind.

St. Peter, that very Apostle who preached, and who was an eye and an ear witness of those wonderful events, which happened at the feast of Pentecost, observes, Acts ii—17, 33, that this was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel. “It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out* of my spirit upon all flesh,” &c.—“That Christ being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath *shed forth* this which ye now see and hear.” This manner of expression alludes to the *mode*, in which they were *baptized by the Holy Ghost*. It was not by *dipping*. The Spirit was *shed forth*, and *poured out upon them*. Although this was the most copious and extraordinary affusion that ever happened, it is never expressed by the word *dipped*, *plunged*, *immersed*, or *overwhelmed*. Indeed, these words are no where used in the sacred volume, relatively to baptism, either *with water* or *with the Holy Ghost*.

I believe we may safely trust and adopt the language of inspiration, which says, the Holy Spirit was *shed forth and poured out upon them*. The same and similar language is made use of on common and more ordinary occasions, as we read in Acts x—44. “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost *fell on*

“*all them which heard the word.*” xi—15.
 “And as he began to speak, the Holy Ghost
 “*fell on them as on us at the beginning.*”
 Which expression is conformable to Acts i—
 8—“Ye shall receive power, after that the
 “Holy Ghost is *come upon you.*” This com-
 munication or baptism of God’s Spirit is rep-
 resented “*by the dew*”—“*by the rain*”—“*by*
 “*showers.*” “He shall come down like rain
 “upon the *mown grass, and like showers that*
 “*water the earth.*” “*I will pour, saith God,*
 “*waters on the thirsty, and floods on the dry*
 “*ground ; I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and*
 “*my blessing on thine offspring.*” “*It is called*
 “*an unction from the Holy One ;*” which is an
 allusion to the ancient custom of *pouring on*
the head, the consecrating oil. The Spirit is
 said *to come upon—to fall upon them—to be shed*
forth—and to be poured upon them.

This language is perfectly familiar and in-
 telligible to Jews and Christians; and has
 therefore been adopted by the Prophets and
 Apostles. It corresponds with their usual
 modes of purifying, and of baptizing with
 water. The sanctifying and comforting in-
 fluences of God’s Spirit are often aptly rep-
 resented in the sacred scriptures by the em-
 blem of water. The communication of these
 influences is emblematically represented by
 the affusion and sprinkling of water in the
 ordinance of baptism. “*I indeed baptize you*
 “*with water.*” I pour and sprinkle water
 upon you ; “*but he shall baptize you with the*

“*Holy Ghost.*”—He shall *shed forth* and *pour out* upon you his blessed Spirit, and *sprinkle your hearts and consciences* thereby, and purify them from the guilty stain of sin.

I think, Sir, that the good Mr. Cleaveland has no reason to be ashamed of the argument, upon which, you say, “he lays so much stress.” Who can reasonably doubt the validity of baptism by *affusion*, when he finds *baptizing, shedding forth, pouring, sprinkling, and anointing*, so frequently used by the pen of inspiration, in the same sense, as words of the same, or similar signification?

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

SIR,

LET us now enquire after the true meaning of that well known passage, recorded in Romans, vi. 4. “*Therefore we are buried with him, by baptism, into death,*” &c. A similar expression occurs in Colossians, ii. 12. Some persons suppose the word *buried*, as here used by the Apostle, is to be understood *literally*, as having reference to the mode of baptizing by *immersion*. Others suppose it is to be understood *figuratively*, as having reference to the *burial of sin*, which the Apostle here calls *the body of sin—our old man*. We

see plainly in what the difference of opinion consists. Now, is the literal, or is the figurative sense, to be preferred? This is the question. It is a fact universally acknowledged, that the inspired writers have sometimes used particular words, literally, and sometimes, figuratively. But it will not be safe and proper, for every individual to adopt either the figurative, or the literal sense of words, as shall best suit his principles and prejudices in other respects. This practice would certainly be very fallacious and even dangerous. We evidently need some established rule, in order to assist and direct our judgment in this matter. The following rule, I believe, has been generally approved by judicious and impartial christians, of all denominations, viz. That the literal sense ought always to be preferred, when it is agreeable to the *context*—to the *general tenour* of the scriptures, and to the *common use* of the word by inspired writers. But if otherwise, we are bound to give the preference to a *figurative sense*, which is not *inconsistent* with the context, or with the real sense of scripture *in general*, or with that *particular sense*, in which the word is commonly used.

We find, in the sacred scriptures, very frequent accounts of *burying the dead*. The circumstances of their *burial* are repeatedly mentioned. But the word *burial* is never made use of, in a *literal* sense, with respect to the *living*. When our Saviour commissioned his

Apostles to administer the ordinance of baptism, he did not command them to *bury* persons under water; or to baptize them by a *burial*. We have many instances on sacred record of persons, to whom the ordinance of baptism was administered; but it is not said nor intimated, that a single individual was *buried* in the water, or baptized by a *burial*. This word, in its literal use and signification, appears to be appropriated, exclusively, to the dead. I believe there is not so much as one instance, either in the old or new testament, of its being used literally with reference to any person *alive*, or with reference to the *mode* of baptizing.

It is evident from the context, that our being "*buried with Christ into death*," as mentioned in the 4th verse; and our being "*planted together in the likeness of his death*," as mentioned in the 5th verse; and our being "*crucified with him*," as mentioned in the 6th verse, are phrases of the same or similar significancy. How then shall we explain and understand these parallel expressions? Shall we understand one of these expressions literally, and the other two figuratively, as may be most agreeable to our particular notions? This would not be impartial and right. We ought to understand all of them literally, or all figuratively. Now, it is plain that all these expressions may, with great propriety, be understood according to the figurative interpretation; but it is impossible

to understand each one according to its literal meaning.

The Apostle says, "*our old man is crucified with Christ.*" And in Gal. ii—20. "I am *crucified with Christ.*" And in the 5th chapter, 24th verse. "They that are Christ's have *crucified the flesh, &c.*" No person, I presume, supposes that we must, by baptism, be literally crucified; that we must be actually nailed to the cross, and there suffer the ignominious and painful death of crucifixion. Every one will admit, that these passages are to be understood figuratively.—"It is *the old man—the body of sin*"—our vicious dispositions and lusts, that are to be mortified and slain.

"Know ye not," says the Apostle, "that so many of us, as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him, by baptism, into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, &c." Now, *to be buried with Christ, by baptism, into death*; and *to be planted together, in the likeness of his death*; are certainly synonymous expressions. But, Sir, where is the *likeness*, where is the resemblance, between a burial in water, a dipping, as Dr. Gill calls it, and the death of Christ?

—the crucifixion of Christ? For he died on the cross.

Mr. Simeon Snow, a serious and sensible writer, having been a baptist minister, in this country, for many years, and who has latterly altered his sentiments, very justly observes, “That he could not see the least likeness or resemblance, between the death of Christ, as represented by the four Evangelists, and baptism by immersion. If Christ had died by being *drowned*, there would have been a likeness.” The *mode of dipping* would then resemble the *manner of his dying*. But a literal burial in water discovers no resemblance to the death of the cross, or to the place and manner in which his dead body was buried.

The land of Judea abounded with large rocks, which were partly above the surface of the ground. In these, the rich prepared tombs, which were called sepulchres on high. Accordingly, we read in Isaiah, xxii—16, “What hast thou here? And whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a *sepulchre* here, as he that *heweth him out a sepulchre on high?*” Thus the prophet reproved Shebna, who was a poor person, for his extravagant and expensive pride and vanity. The common people, when dead, were buried in the ground. But the rich provided for themselves *sepulchres on high*. In one of these sepulchral monuments, our Saviour was entombed. The prophet says, “*he made his*

“grave with the wicked, and with the rich, his
“high places.” For Joseph, we are told, be-
“ing a rich man, “laid the body of Christ in his
“own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the
“rock.”

Dr. Lathrop observes, “that plunging no
“more resembles Christ’s *entombment*, than
“sprinkling does. If there were any cir-
“cumstance in his burial, which *baptism* can
“resemble, it must be his embalmment. For
“it is said, that Nicodemus brought a *mixture*
“of *myrrh and aloes*, and wound the body of Je-
“sus in linen clothes with the *spices*, as the man-
“ner of the Jews is to bury. And after this,
“the women prepared *spices and ointments* and
“came to anoint his body. Accordingly, be-
“fore his death, when the woman poured
“the precious ointment on his head, he said,
“in that she poured it on my head, she did it to
“my burial. She is come to anoint my body to the
“burying. Her pouring it on his head, he
“calls pouring it on his *body*”—anointing his
body to the burying.

Thus, Sir, you see that we can discover
nothing in the baptists’ mode of dipping,
which resembles either the crucifixion or
burial of Christ. Where then shall we find
that important likeness, which St. Paul so
particularly mentions? It is not to be found
in the literal signification of the word *buried*
or *planted*; we must therefore look for it in
the figurative meaning. We have already
observed that the word *buried*, in its literal

use, is never applied to *baptism*, or to persons while alive, but to the dead. We now observe, that the word *to plant*, has a primary and literal reference to vegetables, and vines, and trees, and their various seeds. These are sowed and planted *literally*. But in a *figurative* sense, the Apostle informs us, that “they who are baptized into Jesus Christ are baptized into his death.” They are, *by baptism, figuratively crucified* with him, *planted* with him, and *buried* with him.

We have several times observed, that the *dative case*, in the Greek language, when it follows, and is governed by the preposition *en*, is frequently and grammatically used as the instrument. Our translators have often rendered the word *en*, in such a manner, as to express its instrumentality. But they have sometimes, perhaps without sufficient reason, adopted a different language, as in Colossians ii—12. Persons are there said to be “buried with Christ *in baptism*.” The Greek preposition is *en*, and it might have been translated correctly into the English word *by*, or *with*; and then this passage would have corresponded exactly to the parallel text in Romans. The Apostle here says, “that we are buried with him, *by baptism*, into death.” Baptism, in this place, is not mentioned as being a *burial*, or as being an allusion to a burial. It is mentioned as the *instrumental cause* of our being, in a *figurative sense*, buried with Christ, *planted* with Christ, and *crucified*

with Christ. By *baptism*, we have engaged to *mortify* and *bury our sins*; it is consequently urged as an argument for newness of life.

The baptists seem to have taken it for granted, that baptism is here called a burial; which is a *very great mistake*. Dr. Gill tells us, “that baptism is called a burial, a burial “with Christ, a representation or resemblance “of his, which it cannot be, unless it be administered by *dipping*.”

We have shown, that there is no resemblance between the baptists' *mode of dipping*, and the *manner* in which our Saviour *died*, or the *manner* in which his body was *deposited* in the *sepulchre*. And now, Sir, let me request you to observe, that baptism *is not called a burial by the Apostle*; nor in any part of the bible; nor are we informed by any inspired writer, that it was instituted in order to be, literally, a resemblance of Christ's death or burial.

Baptism, it is true, has particular reference to Christ. It is a sacrament of the new testament or covenant, which is founded in his death; and it fitly signifies and represents the cleansing and sanctifying efficacy of his word, and blood, and spirit. It also confirms and represents, publickly, our obligations to conform to the death, and burial, and resurrection of Christ, by *mortifying and burying our sins, and by walking in newness of life*.

I am sensible, that some persons have imagined that St. Paul, in the passages we have been considering, had a particular and ex-

clusive reference to an internal and spiritual baptism; but this opinion is neither necessary nor well founded. For the external baptism by water is emblematical of the internal baptism by the influences of God's Spirit; and the *thing* signified and represented by the *emblem* is, in the judgment of charity, supposed to be implied, and connected with it.

I wish, Sir, that you would review, with attention and impartiality, the 6th chapter to the Romans, and the second and third chapters to the Colossians. You will find that St. Paul was not endeavouring to specify dipping, as the only lawful and valid mode of baptizing. His great and constant design evidently was, to enforce the necessity of genuine repentance, and of a holy life and conversation, in opposition to the licentious principles and immoral practices of the antinomian and Judaizing Gnosticks, who were a very troublesome and mischievous sect, in the days of primitive christianity. Every verse, and every line was written with this intention and tendency. "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.*" He rejects the impious thought with abhorrence. "*How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*" And then introduces baptism as a principal argument. "*Know ye not, that as many of us, as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?*" By baptism, we have professed publickly our faith in him

as being the true Messiah—our belief in the doctrines and truths which he inculcated.—We have, by baptism, been admitted into his visible kingdom, and have promised to be submissive and obedient; and are therefore bound to obey him as our acknowledged Lord and Master. We are also *baptized into his death* as well as life. *By baptism*, we profess our belief that Christ actually suffered and died on the cross, to redeem and save sinners—not merely from the condemning guilt of sin, but also from its reigning power and dominion; from all our unlawful inclinations, and vicious habits and practices. By baptism, we acknowledge ourselves “*crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed*”—that we are obligated hereby to mortify our fleshly appetites and worldly lusts, our irregular passions and sinful deeds of the body. Having become *dead to sin, as Christ died for sin*; having, in conformity to his death, *crucified our old man*, the next thing of course is, to bury “*this body of sin.*” The Apostle accordingly observes: “*Therefore we are, by baptism, buried with Christ.*” He begins the verse with the word *therefore*, which shows that this passage is connected, as an inference, with something that preceded it. We are baptized into the life of Christ, into the death of Christ, and, consequently, into the burial of Christ. To be *buried with Christ by baptism*, is to be baptized into his burial.

This is evidently the import and sense of the expression.

Baptism is always accompanied, either with an implicit, or explicit confession of faith. As we profess to believe that Christ actually lived and died, so we profess to believe that his dead body was laid in a tomb, where it remained three days and three nights. And as we are bound, by baptism, to conform to Christ's death in the crucifixion and mortification of our sins, so we are also bound to become conformable to his burial, in burying sin. We must renounce sin utterly, and bury it out of our sight, as if it were a dead corpse, or loathsome carcase. It is in this *figurative sense*, that St. Paul used the word *buried*. It does not appear that he had reference to the *literal burial* of our bodies, by dipping them in water.

As the death and burial of Christ, prepared the way for his resurrection and glorious exaltation, so the death and burial of sin are pre-requisite, in order to a holy and virtuous life. The Apostle therefore adds, "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Every word, according to this construction, is intelligible and instructive. But if we attempt to understand the passage literally, we immediately meet with insuperable difficulties. The Apostle styles baptism a circumcision, more directly than he calls it a burial. He

endeavours to satisfy the Colossians, that they were sufficiently circumcised, being, by the "*circumcision of Christ*, buried with him in "baptism." But the baptists do not pretend, that the *môde* of baptism literally resembles circumcision. The same Apostle also tells us, that *we are by baptism buried* with him into death. But the baptists do not understand the word *death*, as here mentioned, literally. They do not suppose, that the person baptized, must be literally buried under water, until literally dead. Why then should we understand the word *buried* literally? No good reason can be assigned. We are compelled to adopt the figurative interpretation. We are, by baptism, bound to mortify and bury our sins, and arise from this state of spiritual death, to a new and spiritual life. This is evidently the Apostle's meaning.

He further illustrates this doctrine, by saying, "For if we have been planted together "in the likeness of his death, we shall also "be in the likeness of his resurrection." It appears that we are as truly baptized into the *crucifixion and resurrection* of Christ, as into his burial. *If we are planted together in the likeness of his death*, that is, baptized into his crucifixion and burial, "*we shall also be in the "likeness of his resurrection.*" By baptism, we profess to believe that Christ, having died, and being laid in the tomb, on the third day, arose from the dead, *as the first fruits of them that slept.*

The word planted, according to its common and literal use, has reference to the seeds of vegetables. When corn or grain is planted or sowed, it dies and rots in the ground, and then the blade springs up and bears fruit. The Apostle, therefore, has repeatedly made use of this figure, in order to represent the death and resurrection of mankind. We are already raised, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to the prospect and hope of life and immortality beyond the grave. We are bound, by our baptismal engagements, to arise immediately from a state of spiritual death, and become alive in the cause of religion and virtue. “*If ye be risen with Christ,*” says the Apostle, “*seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth ; and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*”

In the church of England, the ordinance of baptism is administered *with the sign of the cross*, as being a resemblance of Christ's death, or *crucifixion*. The Baptists administer this ordinance by *immersion*, which they suppose resembles the *burial* of Christ. The Presbyterians and Congregationalists in general, (though not strenuous as to the mode) commonly administer baptism by *affusion* or *sprinkling*, which method they consider as having a suitable allusion to the *pouring out of God's*

Spirit, and sprinkling of Christ's blood, which are said to sanctify and *cleanse us from all sin*. But that *figurative likeness*, which the Apostle particularly mentions, is of a moral nature, and evidently alludes to the *crucifixion, and burial, and resurrection* of Christ. As Christ was, literally, crucified, so we are said, by baptism (in figurative language) to have crucified our old man—our sins. And as Christ was, literally, buried, so we are said, by baptism (in figurative language) to have buried our sins. And as Christ arose, literally, from the dead, so we are said, by baptism (in figurative language) to arise from the death of sin, to a new and spiritual life. The whole representation, according to the Apostle, is figurative. It is a continued metaphor—an instructive, striking allegory, happily calculated to teach us the necessity of a genuine renovation, in our temper and behaviour.

If, Sir, after all that has been said, you should *suppose* that dipping was practised in the days of the Apostles, and that St. Paul had probably a reference to this mode of baptizing, your supposition will not prove the point, but take it, without proof, for granted. So far as we have any account from history, the *mode* of baptizing has been various (and there might have been different modes, even in the apostolick age.) However in those times and places, where *dipping* anciently prevailed most, it was never deemed essential.

I will conclude these remarks, by observing, that *allusions*, in favour of baptizing by *affusion* or *sprinkling*, are numerous and forcible. The blood of Christ is called the *blood of sprinkling*. The sanctifying influences of God's Spirit are said to be *poured out upon us*. Our hearts are said to be *sprinkled*—our consciences are said to be *sprinkled*. The prophet says, *I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean—and so shall he sprinkle many nations, &c. &c.*

Now, Sir, on supposition the word *dipped*, had been used in all these, and in similar places, would not the baptists have told us, that they alluded expressly to their mode of baptism? If Ezekiel, when personating the Messiah, had declared, “*then will I dip you in clean water and ye shall be clean*; and from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you;”—if Isaiah, when prophesying concerning Christ, had said, “*so shall my servant dip many nations*;” should you not think that these expressions were strong arguments in proof of *dipping*, as being the gospel mode of baptizing? All I ask is this, that they may now be considered as arguments equally strong and conclusive, in favour of *sprinkling*.

I am, Sir, &c.

R

LETTER XIX.

SIR,

“WE are informed by the Evangelists, that John, the forerunner of Christ, was called a *Baptist*, and that he baptized persons *in the river Jordan*, and in *Enon*, because there was much water there.” These circumstances, which attended the ministry and baptism of John, are considered by you, as being very powerful arguments in favour of immersion, even to the utter exclusion of all other modes of baptizing. We will endeavour to examine them with suitable care and impartiality. But let it be premised, that John did not baptize persons, “*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*” His baptism was a religious rite, which he administered under the Mosaic institution. It cannot, therefore, be thought an indispensable rule, in all respects, for christians under the *new testament dispensation*; which, the Apostle expressly informs us, was not in force until the *death of Jesus Christ, the testator.*

John was the last and greatest prophet under the law. He observed all the requisitions of that rigorous institution, with the strictest austerity of manners. It was predicted, that *this messenger of Christ should go before him, in the spirit and power of Elias*; who, in the days of Ahab, fled into the wilderness,

and was there fed by the ravens. *We are accordingly told, "that John came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine, and the Jews said he hath a devil.—The son of man came eating and drinking, and they said, behold a glutton and wine-bibber; a friend of publicans and sinners."*

It is evident that the practice of John, in private life, and in his official character, was never intended as an example, which we are bound implicitly to imitate. John, previously to his undertaking the sacerdotal office, lived the solitary life of a hermit, in the wilderness. Are we obliged to quit the society of men, and live sequestered from all our friends and connexions, in some lonely, dreary desert?—"John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins; his meat also was locust and wild honey." Are we under obligations to relinquish the comforts and conveniences of this life, and live as he lived, on the same kind of food, and dress as he dressed, with the same kind of clothing? John made no use of the temple or synagogues, where the Jews always resorted for public worship and instruction, but preached in the field, at a distance from the city, and from the habitations of mankind; and undoubtedly on the bank of Jordan, or some other natural stream or fountain; for it was absolutely impossible for him, and his hearers to subsist without water. But shall we forsake our dwelling-houses—our meeting-houses, consecrated to

the services of religion, and become field-preachers? Shall we leave our homes, and encamp in some grove, on the brink of some river or pond, and invite the people, from all the neighbouring and remote towns and parishes, to assemble at said place, for the purpose of being religiously instructed and baptized.

I am persuaded, you do not suppose, that we are obligated to imitate the example of John, in every particular. You do not believe, that we are bound to live in the wilderness as he lived, and dress as he dressed, and preach as he constantly preached, in the field, on the bank of some river. What reason have you then to suppose, that we are indispensably obliged to imitate him, with respect to the place and mode of baptism? I mean, on supposition it could be fairly proved, that he actually baptized persons, by dipping them in Jordan. We live under a milder dispensation. *None of Christ's "commandments are grievous. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light,"* especially when compared with the *Jewish ritual*.

If it should be admitted that John baptized by immersion, it will not follow that *this is the only lawful and valid mode of baptism, under the gospel*. For it is evident, that christians are not required to imitate the practice of John, in all respects. You cannot therefore infer, merely from his example, that they are bound to adopt the same mode of baptizing.

I do not, however, mean to concede that John baptized by immersion. There is not a person living, who knows, certainly, in what mode he administered the ordinance of baptism. It will, I think, appear highly probable, when the subject is properly investigated, that John actually baptized by affusion or sprinkling:

But it is said, that John baptized *in the river Jordan*. A question immediately arises, viz. Does the word *in*; as here mentioned, refer to the *mode* of baptizing; or to the place, where the ordinance was administered. Let us compare this expression with other passages, which have reference to the same baptism. It is said in Mark i, 4, “that he baptized *in the wilderness*.” And in John i, 28, “That he baptized *in Bethabara*, beyond *Jordan*.” And in the 3d chapter, 23d verse, “that he baptized *in Enon*,” which was not the name of a river, but of a tract of land, that lay between Jordan and Salem. Now it is unquestionably plain, that the word *in*, as used in these three different passages, has express reference to the *place*, where John baptized, and not to the *mode* of administering the ordinance. As John was *in the wilderness*—*in Bethabara*—and *in Enon*, when he baptized; so he was, on another occasion, *in* or at *Jordan*. The preposition *in*, may have reference to the place, where John was, when he administered the ordinance of baptism, and not to the mode in

which he baptized. It is probable, being at a distance from any house, and having no suitable vessel, which could be conveniently used, that they sometimes went to the river itself; and perhaps a few steps into the water, in order to administer the ordinance of baptism. But this does not determine the mode. It does not prove that he plunged them. He might notwithstanding, take up the water in his hand, and sprinkle or pour it on their heads. Besides, there is no necessity of supposing, that they did so much as step into the edge of the river. For you well know, that the Greek preposition *en*, very commonly signifies *at, by, with, &c.* In the five first books of the new testament, according to Mr. Chaplin's account, whose statement is undoubtedly correct, *this very word* is rendered *at*, by our translators, no less than 53 times. It is rendered *by*, 44 times; and *with*, 42 times, &c. Now, if the original word *en*, had been translated into the English word *at*, the meaning would have corresponded exactly with the sense of those other passages, we just now cited. It would have been expressive of the place, where John baptized. For the places, *at which* he administered baptism, were the *wilderness, Bethabara, Jordan, and Enon.* John baptized in, or *at* the river Jordan. This is mentioned, as being one of those places, where he preached, and where he administered the ordinance of baptism.

It is, however, very evident, that John did not commence his ministrations at Jordan, nor at Enon. We are informed in John x, 40, "*That he at first baptized beyond Jordan.*" Having spent a life of solitude, for many years, in the wilderness of Bethabara, beyond Jordan, there he began to preach and baptize. We have no account of rivers or streams of water, in that country. It was, probably, a dry and barren place. Accordingly, when his fame had spread abroad, and the inhabitants of "*Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,*" had assembled to attend on his ministry, they were but poorly accommodated. John, it seems, removed to *Jordan*, and afterward to *Enon*, *because there was much water there*, or as it is in the original (*polla udata*) many waters, that is, many rivulets and springs. Much water was certainly needed, in that sultry climate, for the refreshment and various uses of such an immense concourse of people, collected in the open field, at a great distance from home, with their horses, and mules, and asses, and camels. Some were, undoubtedly, going away, and others constantly coming. But the encampment, probably, lasted more than a year. Every person of reflection must be convinced, that the situation, which John made choice of, was very convenient and necessary for their accommodation, even if the mode of baptizing were that of sprinkling.

Ministers, who now baptize by affusion or sprinkling, have no occasion of going to a river; yet if they were circumstanced as John was, in a hot, rocky country, almost destitute of wells; if they had vast congregations, and no meeting-houses; and were about to encamp in the field a number of months, with their people, for the purpose of preaching and of administering the ordinances of the gospel—they would, undoubtedly, choose a place, similar to that of Jordan or Enon. We cannot therefore infer, from the circumstances of the place, where John was stationed and preached, that he baptized by immersion.

The truth of the foregoing remarks may be further illustrated, by attending to the practice of *Christ's disciples*, previously to his crucifixion. For while John was preaching, and administering the ordinance of baptism, in the country of Enon, they were preaching and baptizing in the land of Judea; as we read in John iii, 22. "*After these things, came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and baptized.*" It was told John, that Christ baptized, and that all men came to him. He must increase, replied John, but I must decrease. John iv, 1, 2. "When, therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples) he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee."

It is undeniably evident, that the disciples of Christ, previously to his crucifixion, baptized a *vast number* of people. But, Sir, we do not find a single word said, about *Enon*, or *Jordan*, or any other *river*, or *brook*, or *pond of water*. It is not even intimated, that they ever *dipped* a person, or that they ever went to a *natural stream or fountain of water*, for the purpose of baptizing. What can be the reason? Why do we hear so much said at the present day, concerning the baptism of John, and so little concerning the baptism of Christ? (John was a few months older than Christ, and began his ministry a little sooner; but they were contemporaries, and both employed in preaching, and in baptizing, at the same time, and among the same people.) We have already anticipated the reason. The disciples of Christ were not field preachers. They were itinerant preachers. Christ sent them forth, repeatedly, *two and two*. He ordered them to go from *house to house*; and from *city to city*. They preached in private houses and synagogues; and where they preached, there they undoubtedly baptized. Accordingly, if John had been an itinerant or travelling preacher, we should never have heard of his baptizing people at Jordan, or Enon. This incident, on which the baptists lay so much stress, seems to have been wholly owing to the peculiarities of his education in the wilderness, and of his circumstances as a field preacher.

There appears to have been a perfect consistency throughout the whole of John's character and conduct. He resided in the *wilderness*, and *there* he commenced his ministrations—in *Bethabara, beyond Jordan*. But when his audience became vastly numerous, and a more convenient station was necessary, he fixed his stand on the banks of Jordan, and among the smaller streams of Enon. Wherever he lived, there he preached; and where he preached, there he baptized. It would have been as unnatural for him, to have left the encampment, and have gone to a synagogue or dwelling-house, in order to baptize persons, as it would be for us, to leave the meeting-house, and go to the field, for that purpose.

The disciples of Christ conducted with the same consistency and propriety. We have no account of their going to a river, in order to administer the ordinance of baptism. Where they preached, there they baptized. And if ministers of the gospel, at the present day, would be equally consistent, they must either baptize in the meeting-houses, where they preach, or else they must become field-preachers, and encamp and preach in the field, where they baptize.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R XX.

SIR,

AS was proposed, we have examined the places where John administered baptism. We can find no circumstance, from which it appears, that he did baptize, by dipping persons under the water. It is not said that he dipped them. It is not intimated that any preparations were made for the change of dress, or that suitable accommodations were provided for the different sexes. The number baptized, was prodigiously great. We are told, that *Jerusalem*, the metropolis of the nation, and that *all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan*, went out to him, and were baptized by him, in or at Jordan. Now it seems scarcely supposable, that one man should have had sufficient strength—that he should have been able to stand in the water day after day, and long enough at a time, to dip such an amazing multitude of people, without destroying his own health and life. I do not say that the thing was absolutely impracticable; but it certainly seems almost incredible, upon *natural principles*; and we have no reason to think, that John was favoured with *supernatural* assistance; for it is expressly said, concerning him, “*that he did no miracle.*”

On the other side, John has told us, “that he was sent to baptize *with* water.” “I indeed baptize you *with* water, but he shall

“ baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost and *with* “ fire.” This manner of expression, as we have already observed, indicates that the water was used as the instrumental element; and applied by the hand of John to the persons baptized. Baptism *with* water, is here mentioned, as an emblem of baptism *with* the Holy Ghost: The sanctifying influences of God’s Spirit, are represented in the language of scripture, as being *shed forth and poured out upon mankind, like rain.* This common representation is strictly and strikingly applicable to the practice of baptizing *with* water, according to the usual mode of *affusion* or *sprinkling.*

Although John administered baptism, *in* or at the river Jordan, and at Enon, nevertheless he baptized them *with* water—*with* the water of Jordan and Enon—or *with* the river *Jordan*, as that passage might have been translated; and then the different passages would have corresponded. For, according to our translation, it is said, no less than four times, that “ John baptized *with* (*en*) water.” We have observed, that the original preposition *en*, which is often rendered *in* and *at*, is also frequently translated into the English words *by* and *with.* The words *by* and *with,* are commonly used in the same sense, and denote the instrumentality of the succeeding word. In order to evince the truth of this observation, on a former occasion, I quoted a certain passage of scripture, about the sense of

which there is no dispute. You and I, and every body else, are entirely agreed as to its meaning. Now as one such passage is of more importance in the present controversy, than a thousand doubtful or disputable passages, I will again recite it. The Jews said, "that our Saviour cast out devils *by (en)* Beelzebub." "Christ replied, if I *by (en)* Beelzebub cast out devils, *by (en)* whom do your children cast them out? But if I *with (en)* the finger of God cast out devils," &c. This sentence is unquestionably translated right; for it will admit of no other translation. In this short sentence, we find the word, immediately following the preposition *en*, used instrumentally, four times. As the *finger of God* was the *instrument* with which Christ cast out devils; so water was probably the *instrument*, in the hand of John, with which he administered baptism.

Although John baptized so many persons, Jesus Christ is the only individual, whose name is particularly mentioned; as in Matthew iii, 16, and Mark i, 9, 10. It is said that our Saviour *was baptized of John in Jordan*. The Greek prepositions, originally used, are *eis* and *en*, and very frequently signify *at* and *to*, as well as *in*; and are often translated into each of these different words. However, if it should be supposed that Christ actually stepped within the verge of the river, this will not prove that he was dipped; for he might, notwithstanding, have been sprinkled.

It is further added, *that being baptized, he went up, straightway, out of the water.* If we should understand this expression literally, it would not decide the question, and determine the mode in which he was baptized. But, as none pretend that our translation is perfect, it will be proper for us to consult the original text. The Greek preposition *apo*, which is here translated *out of*, agreeably to its most common signification, as used by the Apostles, might have been rendered *from*. For according to Mr. Chaplin's account, our translators have, in translating the five first books of the new testament, translated the original word *apo*, into the English word *from*, 235 times; and into the English words *out of*, but 42 times; which is more than *five to one*, against the present translation. Now, Sir, if our translators, instead of saying that Jesus was baptized in Jordan, had said, that he was baptized *at*, or *with* Jordan—if, instead of saying, that he came up out of the water, they had said, that he came up *from* the water, I am ready to think, there would have been but very few baptists in this part of the country.

But you tell us, in your pamphlet upon close communion, “that no person can
 “with a very good face deny that John,
 “Christ's forerunner, was a baptist. Christ
 “was baptized by a baptist, in Jordan; he was
 “therefore a baptist. Christ's disciples were
 “baptized in Jordan or in Enon, and by a

“ baptist ; the fair conclusion is, they all were baptists.” I presume, that you are the first writer of learning and sense, who ever made use of this argument. If therefore the argument has any merit, it belongs to you, exclusively. But, Sir, were you ever acquainted with any person, who actually denied that John was a baptist ? Do not we all know that he is, repeatedly, called a *baptist* ?— That this was even his *surname* ? We do not, however, know that Jesus Christ was a baptist. He is no where denominated a baptist, in the sacred volume. John, according to the scriptures, was the only person of that denomination, during the age of Christ and of his Apostles. But, in what sense was the word baptist originally used ? This is the question. And to me it seems very strange, that you, who appear to have been so fond of consulting lexicons and dictionaries on other occasions, should wholly neglect them in the present case. Johnson and Perry, in defining the word, say, “ *that, a baptist is he, who administers baptism ;*” and in this definition, I presume, they agree exactly with all other dictionaries, whether English, Latin, or Greek. The original Greek word is *baptstēs* ; and its signification is a *baptizer*, or he who administers baptism, not he who receives it. John administered the ordinance of baptism to a prodigious number of people, and on this account he obtained the *surname* of baptist, or the *baptizer* ; but those persons

whom he baptized were never called baptists. John obtained the name of baptist or baptizer, merely in consequence of the vast number that he in person baptized, and not on account of the *mode*, in which he administered the ordinance. *This* is another and *distinct* question, though always very improperly blended together by you.

The disciples of Christ, considered conjointly, administered baptism to very many persons; but no one individual among them ever baptized a sufficient number, to obtain the name of baptist or baptizer. This name was appropriated, by the Holy Ghost, to John, as his peculiar title. Now, Sir, by what authority have you told us, that the disciples of Christ were baptists? By what authority have you asserted that Christ himself was a baptist, who never baptized a single person, in any part of his life?

Those persons, who formerly denied the lawfulness and validity of infant baptism, and who held that total immersion was absolutely essential, we find, in ancient history, were called *Anabaptists*. But not being satisfied with this appellation, they usurped the name of baptists. We have no disposition to contend about the name. But in order to correct misrepresentations, and prevent mistakes in future, it is necessary to retain the original and primary signification of the word. I have therefore shown, that the word baptist, originally meant a *baptizer*, or one who ad-

ministered baptism. Accordingly, John was a baptist, and with the greatest propriety always called by this name. But Jesus Christ was not a baptist, and never called by this name in the holy scriptures: You are probably the first person, who ever asserted, publicly, that Jesus Christ was a baptist. I do not know whether you mean to be understood according to the primitive, or modern import of the word. The assertion, however, can never be justified.—What, Sir, should you think of Robert Barclay, if, in his Apology for the Quakers, he had expressly declared that Jesus Christ was a Quaker? Should you not suppose him guilty of the most audacious, if not impious, arrogance?—Is not this a true picture of your own conduct? Why then, may not we retort, with equal propriety, and say, *thou art the man?*

The Evangelists have not intimated, that Christ was dipped—they have not even said that he *went into the water.* Why then should we suppose, that *he came out of the water?* It is undeniably evident, that the Greek preposition *apo*, which is here rendered *out of*, commonly and properly signifies *from*, and is generally so translated in the new testament. Jordan is the place, where John baptized him, but this does not designate the mode, in which his baptism was administered.

On the other side, it appears highly probable, from the nature, design and circum-

stances of Christ's baptism, that he was actually baptized by affusion or sprinkling.

Dr. Lathrop says, "the baptism of Christ was his public inauguration. Upon this occasion, he was declared, from heaven, to be the Son of God. It is well known, that persons were of old, by God's appointment, consecrated to public offices (especially those of prophet, priest, and king, which Christ sustained) by the ceremony of anointing, or pouring oil on the head. The baptism of Christ answered to that ceremony. The prophet Isaiah, speaking in the person of Christ, observes, chap. lxi. 1, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings, &c.* The Evangelist says, *Jesus being baptized, came up from the water, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son.* There is a plain correspondence between the two passages. *Isaiah* says, the Spirit of God was upon him, because he was anointed to preach. *Matthew* says, the Spirit of God was upon him, after he was baptized, when he was proclaimed to be God's Son. His baptism was plainly the anointing foretold, and was probably performed in the same manner that unction was. This account of Christ's baptism is agreeable to the words of St. Peter, *Acts* x. 36, 37, 38. *The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; that word ye know,*

“ which began from Galilee, after the baptism
 “ which John preached; how God anointed
 “ Jesus Christ of Nazareth, with the Holy Ghost,
 “ and with power.”

Although Christ was not a Levite by birth, but born of the royal tribe of Judah, and a priest after the order of Melchizedek, his baptismal consecration was indispensably necessary. The Apostle, to the Hebrews, in the 5th chapter, 4th verse, observes, with particular reference to Christ, “ *No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*” As Aaron lived under the law of Moses, so did Christ. This law did not allow the Levites to undertake the sacerdotal office, till they had arrived at the age of twenty-five years and upward. Christ, therefore, waited until he was about thirty years old. The law of Moses expressly required, that the Levites should be publickly inaugurated and consecrated to the services of the sanctuary, by a solemn rite of purification. Accordingly, Moses, as he was commanded, took Aaron and his sons and washed, or baptized them, before the assembled nation. In conformity to this Levitical law, our Saviour was baptized by John, in the presence of many witnesses. John, at first, hesitated. Christ explained the command, saying, “ *thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness; and then he suffered him.*” Christ had reference to all the instituted rites, and religious ceremonies of the Mosaic law. “ Thus it be-

“ cometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness.” He speaks in the plural number, including John with himself. They both lived under the same law. *The kingdom of heaven*—the gospel institution, *was at hand*; but it had not commenced. Christ was therefore baptized, in obedience to a religious rite of the Mosaic dispensation, which was not yet abrogated, but still in full force. When an infant, he was circumcised; and being the first-born, he was dedicated to God in his temple. When twelve years old, he observed the passover. This was probably the first time; and he would not neglect the last opportunity, although it happened on the very night, in which he was betrayed to death. Thus uniformly and strictly, he observed every *ritual*, as well as moral precept, of God’s law.

The various purifications; which Moses performed and required, we have shown, are expressly called *baptisms*, by the Apostle, in the original. When Moses baptized Aaron and his sons, he said, in the presence of the whole congregation, “ *This is the thing, which the Lord hath commanded to be done.*” It is likely, that John used the same prescript form of solemn words, when he baptized Christ. The baptism of Aaron and his sons was inaugural. So was the baptism of Christ. It was his consecration and induction to publick office. He was, hereby, legally called of God—*anointed* and authorized, *as was Aaron*, to un-

dertake his official ministrations. And now, Sir, if you will take your bible in hand, and turn to the 8th chapter of the book of Numbers, you will there find in what *mode*, or manner, this *baptism* was administered. The chapter, in general, relates to the consecration of the Levites; but the 5th, 6th, and 7th verses have an explicit and particular reference to the *mode*, in which Moses was expressly commanded to *apply* and *use* the consecrating water. “*And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them; and thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them; sprinkle water of purifying upon them*”—*Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, &c.* It is true, that the Levites were ordered to *wash their clothes and make themselves clean*; and on all succeeding occasions, before they entered the tabernacle or *inner court* of God’s house, they were expressly required to *wash their hands and feet at the laver*. But that washing, or purification, or cleansing, or *baptism*, which was the *sacred rite of consecration*, and which Moses administered *with his own hand*, was performed *by sprinkling the water of purifying upon them*. This argument, in connexion with others, I think, sufficiently proves, that Jesus Christ was baptized by *affusion* or *sprinkling*. The law did *not* require *dipping*. It *expressly* required *sprinkling*. “*Christ did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them in every iota and*

“*tittle.*” He was baptized *with* water, and at the same time *with* the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God descended visibly, and *lighted upon him*, in the form of a dove, and ratified, with an audible voice, that solemn transaction.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R XXI.

SIR,

I HAVE just hinted that the baptism of John was a religious rite under the Mosaic dispensation. This dispensation lasted until the death of Christ. Our Lord having arisen from the dead, instituted the christian baptism. He commissioned and commanded the Apostles to *disciple, and baptize all nations, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* The subjects of baptism are here expressed in the most general and comprehensive terms, which evidently include persons of all ages and of both sexes. We have endeavoured to show that the word baptize signifies to wet or wash, sacramentally, without being restricted in its meaning, to any particular mode of applying or using the water. But you say, that there can be no true and valid baptism, without a total dipping or immersion;—that all other modes of baptizing are a mere nullity, although ad-

ministered by a *suitable* person, and to a *proper* subject, and in the *name of the Holy Trinity*. Sentiments of such nature and tendency need the clearest and most unquestionable proof. We have, in vain, searched for this proof in the baptism of John. Let us now examine the several instances recorded in the new testament, since the institution of the christian baptism; and see if we can find any certain and indubitable evidence, that the Apostles did always dip, or immerse totally under water, those persons whom they baptized.

The first instance of baptism, that occurs, happened at the feast of Pentecost, ten days after the ascension of Jesus Christ. On this occasion, the Apostles preached their first sermons; and on the same day administered baptism to three thousand persons. Some suppose they were dipped. Others believe they were probably baptized by affusion or sprinkling. The inspired writers have not told us in what mode the ordinance of baptism was administered. We have nothing to direct and assist us in forming our opinion, but the circumstances of the case. It is not in my power, to discover a single incident, which, in the least degree, indicates that they were dipped. The Apostles were not field-preachers. They did not, like John, encamp and preach on the bank of a river; but in Jerusalem, twenty miles from Jordan and Enon. It is not said that the people went to any stream of water; or to any natural or

artificial fountain of water, in order to be baptized. Indeed, it is not intimated that they left the city, or even the house, where the Apostles had been preaching. There is, certainly, no evidence or intimation, of any kind, that they were dipped. The supposition, therefore, appears to us very improbable. The improbability is greatly increased, when we consider the shortness of the time, and want of conveniences. It was a surprising emergency; and wholly unexpected, by the preachers and by the hearers. No previous arrangements or preparations had been made by them, for the change of dress. No bathing places had been bespoken or provided. Jerusalem was an inland city, at a distance from the sea-side, and from any river; and its inhabitants were generally hostile to the cause of christianity. Where then, could three thousand persons, principally foreigners, from fifteen different nations, on a sudden, procure the conveniences necessary for immersion? Dr. Gill attempts to surmount these difficulties, by supposing that baths, and that the ten lavers and molten sea of the temple, were probably obtained, and used as dipping places, on this occasion, by the Apostles. But he seems to have forgotten, that those public cisterns were in the possession of the Jewish rulers and priests, the most inveterate enemies of Christ and of his religion—that they were made and reserved, in order to contain clean water for various

uses; and in particular, for the purpose of washing their sacrifices, and also the hands and feet of the Levites, &c. Accordingly, Dr. Willet, and Dr. Lightfoot, and other learned writers upon this subject, have informed us, that those capacious reservoirs were provided with spouts or cocks, by means of which the water was drawn out for the purposes aforesaid. We have no reason to think, that they were ever intended or used as dipping places.

The space of time, which the Apostles had, for baptizing such a vast multitude of people, appears to have been very short. The Jews divided their day, which consisted of twelve hours, into four quarters, assigning three hours to each quarter. Each of these quarters derived its name from that particular hour, when it commenced. The second quarter began with the third hour, and was called *the third hour*, and lasted till the ninth hour; that is, according to our method of computing time, from nine until twelve o'clock. This division of the day into quarters was particularly observed on their great and solemn festivals. The commencement of each quarter, viz. the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour, on these occasions, was proclaimed by the sound of a trumpet. When Peter, therefore, said, it is the third hour of the day, we naturally suppose that he meant the *second quarter*, which began at nine o'clock in the morning, and lasted till noon.

The disciples probably came together into one place, at the beginning of this quarter, which was at nine o'clock—the very time when the Jews offered their morning sacrifice and morning prayer. A miraculous noise and appearance ensued. The report of what had happened, soon spread abroad. A numerous assembly was collected, composed of Jews and proselytes, from almost every nation. We are not told, what number of the Apostles preached; but it is particularly mentioned, how every man of that mixed multitude heard them speak in his own native language. After this, Peter delivered his sermon; a brief epitome of which is recorded in the second chapter of Acts. The sacred historian does not pretend to give the whole discourse, but expressly tells us, “that
“ *with many other words, he did testify and exhort*
“ *them, &c.*” The auditory was astonished;
“ *And they who gladly received the word were*
“ *baptized; and the same day, there were added*
“ *unto them about three thousand souls.*” Now, when we attend to all these circumstances, it evidently appears, that the day must have been far spent, before the Apostles could proceed to the administration of baptism. Many persons have thought, and still think, there was not sufficient time remaining, for the purpose of baptizing so many persons, according to the slow method of immersion. We ought to consider, that it was not a pre-concerted plan—an experiment, in order to

see with how great dispatch the ordinance of baptism might be administered. The candidates were not examined on a previous day, and every thing prepared and made ready before hand. The Apostles preached—the people assembled and heard them—they were convinced—they professed their faith and repentance, and received baptism. It is not said, nor intimated, that they went to the temple, or to any public or private baths, in order to be baptized. No preparations had been made—no river was near; nor is it likely there were any conveniences for dipping; and certainly they had but very little time; and yet the Apostles baptized three thousand persons, on the same day, having previously delivered a number of discourses. There is not the least indication, that these persons were dipped; or that they removed to any particular place, for said purpose. The ordinance of baptism was undoubtedly administered at the very house, where they first assembled; and probably by affusion or sprinkling. For this house was the place, and affusion was the mode, in which the *Apostles* had now been publickly and visibly baptized, by the *shedding forth and pouring out of God's Spirit upon them*, agreeably to the prediction of Christ, of John, and of other prophets.

Secondly, we proceed to consider the baptism of St. Paul, and the circumstances which attended it, as recorded in Acts ix, 17, 18, 19. “Ananias went his way, and entered

“ into the house ; and, putting his hands on
 “ him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even
 “ Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way,
 “ as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou
 “ mightest receive thy sight, and be filled
 “ with the Holy Ghost. And immediately
 “ there fell from his eyes, as it had been
 “ scales ; and he received sight forthwith,
 “ and arose and was baptized. And when
 “ he had received meat he was strengthened.”

It is not said, that they proceeded to any river or stream, or fountain of water. Indeed, it is not intimated that they left the house, or even the room where Paul had lodged, for the purpose of baptizing him. These are circumstances of great importance, and, if they had actually happened, would undoubtedly have been mentioned.

On the other side, every incident attending the case, indicates that he was baptized by affusion or sprinkling. Three days had elapsed since his arrival at Damascus. During this interval he was blind, and ate and drank nothing. Having been baptized, we are told, *he received meat, and was strengthened* ; which expression shows that he had been greatly weakened. Now, is it probable, that a person thus exhausted and enfeebled by long fasting, and by extreme anxiety and agitation of mind, would be in a suitable condition for going abroad, and for receiving baptism by immersion ?

But it is said that he arose, which circumstance, the baptists suppose, intimates that he was dipped—Slender argument!—great mistake! The sacred historian informs us, that *Saul arose*. He adds no more. Here he stops; and here let us stop. It is not intimated that he moved a single step. Influenced by a suitable respect and veneration for Jesus, whom he had persecuted, and for a christian institution, and for the holy Apostle, *he arose*.—Although weak and debilitated, with great propriety of conduct; he arose from his seat or couch, and stood upon his feet; and in this standing, reverential posture, received from the hand of Ananias, the sacrament of baptism. This, Sir, is the scriptural account. Ananias found Paul in the house of Judas—delivered his message, and *laid his hands on him—he received his sight forthwith; and arose, and was baptized*.

Thirdly. While Peter was preaching the gospel at the house of Cornelius, the Centurion, a Gentile, we are told, the *Holy Ghost fell on them; who heard him*. The Apostle, perceiving what had happened, exclaimed, Acts x. 47. “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?” Peter does not say, can any man forbid us the use of his brook or bathing place? He does not say, can any man forbid our going into, or through his field? But can any man forbid water? This manner of expression is not applicable.

to the mode of dipping, nor to the common practice of leaving the house, and of going forth to a river or pool, for the purpose of immersion. But, as Dr. Osgood justly observes, “He expresses himself in the very
 “ words which we should expect one of our
 “ ministers would have used under similar
 “ circumstances; *can any man forbid water,*
 “ that is, forbid its being brought into the
 “ room? Is not this the most natural and ob-
 “ vious meaning—an idea which the form
 “ of words and mode of expression instantly
 “ and fully excite in our minds? Accord-
 “ ingly, there is no hint of their going abroad,
 “ or of any other preparation, in order to
 “ their being baptized, but that of bringing
 “ a little water into the room. The history
 “ leads us to believe, that this was performed
 “ at the very juncture when Peter proposed
 “ it, and in the very apartment in which they
 “ were then assembled.”

We well know, how strongly the believing Jews and profelytes were prejudiced against the uncircumcised Gentiles. Peter therefore appeals to their reason and consciences on this occasion, laying, “*can any man for-
 “ bid water that these should not be baptized,
 “ who have received the Holy Ghost as well as
 “ we?*” Who among us can any longer ob-
 ject? Will any one prohibit the providing
 of water, or refuse to bring it for the pur-
 pose of baptizing these persons—these Gen-
 tiles, who have been baptized with the Holy

Ghost, as well as we? He evidently alludes to the very mode in which they had received this spiritual baptism; as in the 44th and 45th verses. “While Peter yet spake these words, “the Holy Ghost *fell on all them* that heard “the word. And they of the circumcision, “who believed, were astonished, because that “*on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of “the Holy Ghost.*” This baptism, by the effusion of God’s Spirit, silenced every objection. As Peter and his circumcised hearers, had been baptized by the *shedding and pouring out* of the Holy Ghost, at the feast of Pentecost, so his uncircumcised gentile hearers were now baptized, by having the same spirit *poured out upon them*. They accordingly had the same right to be baptized *with* water. We are told, the Holy Ghost *fell on them that heard him*; and, if we may be allowed to use the language of scripture, his influences *fell like rain*. It is highly probable, that the Apostle applied the baptismal water to those persons thus baptized with the Holy Spirit, after a similar manner.

The sacred scriptures commonly join baptism with water, and baptism with the Holy Ghost together, as correspondent parts of each other, and express them by the same word, and describe them, as to their mode, in the same way. St. Peter has expressly told us, in what manner Cornelius and his friends were baptized by the Holy Ghost, viz. by *shedding, pouring, &c.* Accordingly, the

affusion or sprinkling of water upon them; was the most striking representation of their spiritual baptism, and of course a very suitable and proper mode of baptizing, and, probably, the mode which he adopted.

Fourthly. The next instance of baptizing, which we shall here note, is that of the jailer and his family. It is mentioned in Acts 16. According to the account given us by St. Luke, they were baptized at home—at midnight—the very *same hour* in which they believed. A terrible earthquake had happened. The keeper of the prison was greatly astonished; and being convinced and converted to the christian faith, by the preaching of Paul and Silas, *he and all his were baptized straightway.* Now, how can we suppose, that they were dipped; or that they left the jail and went away to some convenient place, for that purpose? Nothing of this nature is intimated, and no single circumstance appears to favour the supposition. Their baptism was administered in the dead of the night, while the whole city was undoubtedly alarmed, and in the greatest perturbation. Besides, the Apostles, but a little before this event, had been severely beaten with rods, and so abused, that when leave was granted them, on the ensuing day, to depart, they absolutely refused, until the *magistrates should come, themselves, and fetch them out.* This clearly indicates, that they had not, pre-

viouſly, in a clandestine manner, quitted the priſon and returned.

“You will perhaps ſay, there was a bath, for the purpoſe of dipping perſons, within the limits of the jail.” If an inſpired writer had told us ſo, I ſhould certainly believe him; but we have no reaſon *to be wiſe*, in this matter, *above what is written*. It is, however, ſaid, that the *keeper of the priſon ſprang in trembling, and brought them out*. This is true. He brought them out of the ſtocks—the dungeon—the inner priſon, where he had confined them without any particular orders. He brought them into a room of more liberty and better accommodations. Here the Apoſtles ſpake to *him, and to all his houſehold*. Here he *believed*, and here *he and all his were baptized, ſtraightway*. After they had received baptiſm, it ſeems the jailer proceeded a little further, and brought the Apoſtles into his own houſe, which undoubtedly adjoined, and was within the bounds of their confinement. Here he ſet meat before them, &c. It is not ſaid, nor even hinted, that they were dipped. But every circumſtance ſeems to intimate, that they were baptized by ſprinkling.

Fifthly. We proceed to conſider that well known ſtory of Philip and the Eunuch, on which the baptiſts put ſo much dependence. This is the *only inſtance* mentioned in the new teſtament, after the chriſtian baptiſm was inſtituted, where it is ſaid or intimated, that

any person was baptized at a natural stream or fountain of water; and when we attend to the peculiar and very uncommon circumstances of the case, it will not appear to favour the mode of dipping, any more than that of sprinkling. Philip and the Eunuch were riding in the same chariot. When they had come within sight of water, the Eunuch observed; “*See here is water, what doth hinder me from being baptized?*” Philip told him, *that if he believed with all his heart, he might.* The Eunuch replied, “*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*” There being no objection, *he now commanded the chariot to stand still.* Which expressions plainly show, that they had not stopped, nor arrived at the water, (as Dr. Gill pretends) when the question was first proposed by the Eunuch. They had come to the *sight* of water, but not to the *place* where the water was. According to our translation, “*They both went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip,*” &c. Acts, 8th chapter.

The baptists take it for granted, that Philip dipped the Eunuch. But the sacred historian has not said that he dipped him. It is remarkable, that the same form of words is used with respect to Philip, as is used with respect to the Eunuch. “*They both went down into the water, and they both came*”

“up out of the water.” But it is not pretended, that both were dipped. This manner of expression does not determine the mode in which the Eunuch was baptized. They might, perhaps, go a little way into the water, in order to obtain clean water, for the purpose of sprinkling. It is not likely that they were provided with a change of raiment, nor is it certain, that the water was suitable for dipping. There are, comparatively, but very few streams, upon our roads, of sufficient and suitable depth, for the purpose of total immersion. The supposition, however, that they actually went into the water, at all, is wholly without proof. The words here rendered *into* and *out of*, might have been rendered *to* and *from*. This is a truth beyond dispute, and well known to every one who is acquainted with the Greek. The Greek preposition *eis*, signifies *to*, and *unto*, as well as *into*. We read in John xx, 4, 5, “That the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first *to (eis)* the sepulchre, “yet went not *in*.” Every person perceives, that the word *eis*, in this place, is rightly translated. For if our translators had substituted the preposition *into*, in the room of *to*, it would have occasioned the most palpable absurdity and contradiction. Although the Greek preposition *eis*, is most commonly translated *into*, yet it is very frequently rendered *to* and *unto*; and no less than 285 times, in the five first books of the new tes-

tament, as Mr. Chaplin informs us ; and even in *this very chapter*, which has reference to the baptism of the Eunuch, it is rendered *to* and *unto*, *six* times, and *into* only *once* ; a circumstance that is very remarkable. Again, the Greek preposition *ek*, which is here rendered *out of*, is most commonly and properly translated *from*. It is rendered *from* 102 times, and *out of* but 77 times, in the five first books of the new testament. Rivers and ponds always lie in vallies. Accordingly, when conversing or writing about them, we naturally accommodate our language to their situation. We always descend or *go down*, when approaching toward a natural stream or fountain of water ; and always ascend or *come up*, when we return from them. But nothing can be more trifling, than to infer the mode of baptism from the signification of the words *into* and *out of*, as here rendered by our translators. I do not mean, Sir, to tax you with thus trifling, for the aforesaid inference has never been so much as once hinted at, in your seven sermons.

It will, perhaps, be enquired, why the Eunuch did not stop at some private house for the purpose of being baptized ? There could be no need of this. Besides, the Eunuch was at a great distance from home—among strangers, who were probably, at that time, ignorant of the christian religion, or else its inveterate enemies and opposers. It is not however certain, that he passed by

any house, while in company with Philip; for the country, between Jerusalem and Gaza, is expressly called *desert*. But why did not the Eunuch omit being baptized until he had reached his own house? Because he lived in a remote, heathen land, where there was no Apostle or person authorized to administer the sacrament of baptism. Philip evidently conducted with the strictest propriety. It does not appear that he went out of his way a single rod, in order to obtain water for the purpose of baptizing; but acted, in this respect, as all his predecessors had done. He baptized the Eunuch upon the road, by the side of his chariot, in which he had been journeying and preaching; and thus any prudent minister would do, in similar circumstances, at the present day, even if the mode of administering baptism were that of sprinkling.

Sixthly and lastly. We are informed, in Acts, 16th chapter, that Lydia and her household were baptized in the very place, where Paul had been preaching; which was a public building, erected near the river, for the purpose of prayer and religious exercises. The Jews had their *synagogues* and their *profenchēs*. Their *synagogues* were commonly built in cities and villages. Their *profenchēs* were generally erected at a little distance from other houses, being intended for private as well as public devotion. We are told, *that our Saviour continued all night in prayer to God.*

The original is, “ he continued all night in a “ *proseuchē* of God.” We read, that Paul and Timothy “ went out of the city on the sabbath day, by a river’s side, *where prayer was wont to be made.*” According to the original Greek, “ they went out of the city to a “ *proseuchē* on the river’s side.” It was a *house of prayer*, erected for the worship and service of God. It was in this building, that Paul spake *to the women who resorted thither. Here Lydia believed; and here she and her household were baptized.*

We often meet with ignorant, prejudiced people, who are ready to imagine, that St. Paul delivered the aforesaid exhortation in the open field—on the brink of the river, in which they suppose persons had been previously and frequently dipped; and, consequently, that prayer was wont to be made at said place. This is a great mistake. *Philippi* was not a Jewish, but Grecian city—the capital of Macedonia, and at a great distance from Jerusalem. St. Paul was the first Apostle who ever preached in that city; and the instance, we have mentioned, was very soon after his first arrival, and probably the first discourse that he delivered. Lydia was undoubtedly the first convert, and the very first person, to whom the christian baptism was ever administered in that place.

Philippi being a place of business, a number of Jews and proselytes resided there, for the sake of trade. Just without the limits of

the city, near a river, they erected a *profuehē*, or house of prayer; to which, it seems, a number of women resorted for religious worship. Here Paul and Timothy discoursed—here Lydia heard them—here she believed—and here she and her household were baptized. It is not intimated that they were dipped, or that they went from the house for that purpose.

We read of baptisms in various places and on different occasions; but there is no account that any person ever went from the place where he had been hearing the gospel preached, in order to be baptized at a fountain or river. John lived many years in the wilderness, before he began his publick ministrations. There he preached; and there he baptized; and when the multitude, who attended on his ministry, became vastly numerous, he removed the encampment, for the sake of better accommodations, to Jordan and Enon.

But the disciples of Christ, who lived under the same dispensation, were preachers of a different description. They did not encamp in the open field, but travelled from city to city, and from house to house. Where they preached, there they baptized. Since the resurrection of Christ, and the establishment of the christian baptism, we have but *one* instance mentioned in the new testament, of a person's being baptized at a stream or fountain. This we have shown.

was the Ethiopian Eunuch—a very singular and extraordinary case; and so circumstanced, as to render his baptism, upon the road, expedient and proper; and more convenient than it would have been in any other place, even if the mode of baptizing him were that of sprinkling.

We have examined every passage of scripture, from which any light might be expected, relative to the mode of baptism. Instead of finding that the Apostles always baptized, by dipping persons wholly under water, as the baptists pretend, there is no certainty that they ever dipped a single person, on any occasion.

Some things are clearly revealed, and others, for the same wise and benevolent purpose, are hidden from our eyes. “As
 “Moses went up to mount *Nebo*, and died
 “there; and as the Lord buried him, and
 “concealed the place of his burial, so that no
 “man, to this day, ever knew where his sepul-
 “chre was;” thus the primitive mode of baptism is withheld from our knowledge. We have no certain evidence, in what manner the Apostles did administer the sacrament of baptism; or that they were invariably confined to some one particular mode of baptizing. It does, however, appear highly probable, from the different circumstances in which baptism was then administered, and from the various allusions of scripture to the christian baptism, and from the frequent use

and signification of the word baptism, that they did originally baptize according to the present usual modes of affusion or sprinkling. But whether this was their practice or not, baptism is expressly enjoined, while the *mode* is neither required nor specified. The *mode* of baptism is therefore a *circumstance*, concerning which, we are left at liberty to choose and act according to the dictates of our own understanding and consciences.

Dr. Hemmenway observes, “ that if any
 “ should imagine that dipping was the mode;
 “ in which the Apostles commonly adminis-
 “ tered baptism, this would not evince, that
 “ they disapproved of sprinkling, any more
 “ than the common practice of sprinkling
 “ among us proves that we disallow of dip-
 “ ping. The Apostles might have good rea-
 “ sons, in compliance with the custom or dis-
 “ position of the first converts, to administer
 “ baptism in such a mode as is neither neces-
 “ sary nor expedient for us.”

Mr. Clark says, “ if it were certain (as it
 “ is not) that dipping was the most common
 “ mode of baptizing, in the Apostles’ times;
 “ yet it will by no means follow, that this is
 “ the only lawful mode. For the institution
 “ requiring baptism, has not determined the
 “ mode of administration, but left that as a
 “ matter of indifferency. Therefore, in Ju-
 “ dea, and other warmer countries, where
 “ bathings were so frequent and customary,
 “ persons might, in conformity to their own

“ inclination, have received baptism by dipping. But then, what authority has the choice and practice of some, in a matter of liberty, to bind others.” Other christians have, undoubtedly, the same right of choosing a different mode, that may be more suitable to their condition. In these respects, the gospel allows of greater liberty and latitude than former institutions.

Under the old testament dispensations, their religious rites, with all the formalities attending them, were particularly pointed out, and expressly enjoined. Thus it was with respect to the passover. “ The paschal lamb must be killed in the first month at evening—a male of the first year, and without blemish. He must be roasted, and eaten the same night, with his head, legs, and purtenance—with unleavened bread and bitter herbs—in haste, with their loins girded, with shoes on their feet, and with staves in their hands.” But under the gospel of Christ, we have no such particular directions and injunctions respecting the Lord’s supper.—We have no command, concerning the quantity or quality of the bread or wine, or concerning the time, place, and manner of communion. Accordingly, the practice of christians has been, and still is, very various. Some churches partake once or twice in a year—others much oftener. Some partake kneeling ; some setting in their respective seats ; and others seated around a table,

provided and furnished for that purpose; some at noon, and others much later in the day. But these circumstances, being neither required nor prohibited, are therefore not essential or important.

In former times, the ancient rite of circumcision was not only appointed, but the *mode* of circumcising was also explicitly defined and commanded. The *mode* was therefore absolutely essential and indisputable; and the practice has, of course, been uniform, even from the days of Abraham to the present time. But, under the gospel, the *mode* of baptizing has not been specified or commanded. The *mode* is therefore not essential. The practice has consequently been different; varying according to the variation of times, and places, and circumstances.

I am, Sir, &c.

The first part of the history is a general account of the
 state of the world from the beginning of the world
 to the present time. It is divided into three
 parts. The first part is a general account of the
 world from the beginning of the world to the
 present time. The second part is a general
 account of the world from the present time
 to the end of the world. The third part is a
 general account of the world from the end of
 the world to the beginning of the world.

P A R T III.

ON THE HISTORY OF BAPTISM.

L E T T E R XXII.

SIR,

LET us now spend a few moments in examining history, and see if it will not afford us some additional and useful information, relative to the modes and subjects of baptism.

You tell us, in sermon 3, page 40, “that Mosheim, a very noted church historian, and not very friendly to the baptists, bears direct testimony, that John, Christ’s forerunner, and the church, in the first ages of christianity, practised immersion as the mode of baptizing.” But how does it appear, that this celebrated historian was unfriendly to the baptists? His history has generally been esteemed for its impartiality and correctness. With respect to the mode of baptism, he seems to favour immersion; but with respect to the subjects, he firmly believed that the right of baptism belonged to the infant children of believers, as well as to their parents; and that this right was confirmed;

by apostolick example and the uniform practice of the primitive churches. I hope you will give the historian as much credit, with regard to the subjects of baptism, as you have done with respect to the mode of baptizing. But what has he said? "That John initiated persons into the kingdom of the Redeemer, by immersion or baptism."—By immersion or baptism! Why has he added the word baptism? Undoubtedly in order to qualify the word immersion. For he was not willing to substitute *immersion*, a word of fixed and definite meaning, in the room and place of baptism, which, according to common usage, is not restricted to one and the same signification. It was probably his opinion, that the primitive christians commonly baptized by immersion; but he does not intimate, that this was their practice universally, or that this mode of baptizing was deemed essential to the ordinance of baptism.

Again, you tell us, "that John Calvin, in his institutions, book 4, chapter 15, section 19, says, it is certain that the manner of dipping was used of the old church." You proceed—"Calvin, the celebrated Reformer, of Geneva, observes, in his exposition of Acts viii, 38, "We see here what was the baptismal rite among the ancients, for they plunged the whole body in water. Now it is the custom for the minister to sprinkle only the body or head." "And

“ he too excuses this sprinkling, but how, I cannot tell, not having his book at hand.”

Your conclusions generally comprise much more than their premises. “ Calvin,” you tell us, says, “ it is certain that the manner of dipping was used by the old church.” He also declares, “ that now it is the custom for the minister to sprinkle water on the head.” These different expressions of Calvin serve well to illustrate and explain each other. For as dipping was sometimes practised in the days of Calvin, although it was then customary for ministers to baptize by sprinkling; so sprinkling was sometimes practised in the ancient church, although it was then usual to baptize by dipping. This is a true state of facts, and thus Calvin undoubtedly expected to have been understood. It is impossible for us to ascertain, in what *mode or modes* the Apostles and the first preachers of the gospel administered baptism. We do however know, that dipping and sprinkling were both practised in the second century; and each practice hath been continued, from that period to the present time. Sometimes, and in some places, dipping has been prevalent; and sometimes, and in some countries, sprinkling has prevailed. But in ancient times, the mode of dipping was not considered as essential, nor was it confined to adult believers. The persons baptized in this way were principally infant children.

Calvin was an advocate for the mode of sprinkling. But as you have not favoured us with any of his reasons, I will here subjoin a few lines, which immediately follow your quotation. After having added, “that
 “the common custom is now for the minister
 “to use aspersion,” he observes, “Never-
 “theless, so small a difference of ceremony
 “ought not to be of so great account with
 “us, that we should, for that cause, rend the
 “church, or disturb it, with our contentions
 “and controversies.” And further, he says,
 “that nothing of the substance of baptism is
 “wanting, while the symbol of water is made
 “use of, for the ends which Christ hath ap-
 “pointed. The substance being retained,
 “the church from the beginning enjoyed a
 “liberty of using somewhat different rites.
 “And therefore, we ought not to be unrea-
 “sonably stiff, in things unnecessary or un-
 “commanded.”

In the next place, you produce Dr. *Cave*, and tell us, your author says, this great searcher into antiquity said, “that the party bap-
 “tized, was wholly immersed, or put under
 “water, which was the *common, constant,* and
 “*universal* custom of those times, &c.” This mutilated quotation, according to your own account, was taken from a quotation, printed almost a hundred years ago, in a publication of ten letters, addressed to Bishop *Hoadly*. You have not told us the author’s name. He was probably one of those writers, who

preferred a fictitious signature. To the quotations of this anonymous, antiquated book, which has been answered and confuted again and again, you have applied for witnesses, in order to prove a doctrine which they never believed. *Dr. Cave* is mentioned as saying, “that immersion was the common, constant, and universal custom of those ancient times.” In answer to this very quotation, *Mr. Walker*, who published his treatise on the doctrine of baptisms, more than eighty years since, has favoured us with the following remarks: “*Dr. Cave* was no baptist—nor opposed to the mode of sprinkling as baptism. *He doth not say* that immersing was the constant, and universal custom of those times, but expresses himself with a restriction almost, which is a clear acknowledgment that there were other modes of baptizing then in use.”

The testimony of your witnesses, when impartially considered, is decidedly against you. They have told us, that immersion was anciently practised; but not one of them has said or meant, that the practice was universal. You further tell us, “that all the churches in Europe, Asia, and Africa, ever have done, and do now, practise immersion, save those who are now or have been under the jurisdiction of the Pontiffs of Rome.” I wish you had added a few words more, and told the publick, that these churches always have and still do practise *infant baptism*. This

information would have been very acceptable to many of your readers. For while some ignorantly suppose, that the mode of dipping has always been confined to the adults, others, like yourself, inconsiderately and very abusively, ascribe the practice of infant baptism “to the mother of harlots and “*ghostly Popes of Rome.*”

Having selected your favourite extracts from the aforesaid Ten Letters, “you tell us, “that Dr. Lathrop implicitly confesses them “to be both true and genuine.” Let the Dr. speak for himself. His words are, “The “truth is—the manner of baptizing among “the ancients was looked upon circumstan- “cial, and no way essential to the ordinance. “In the times near to the Apostles, immer- “sion was much practised, but never asserted “to be necessary. Far from this ; sprinkling “was expressly allowed, and frequently used, “especially in cases of infirmity, or haste, or “want of water, or other conveniences. “This, the *author of the letters himself concedes,* “‘that from the Apostles’ times, for thirteen “hundred years, sprinkling was permitted “on extraordinary occasions.’ Cyprian, “(who wrote within about 150 years of the “Apostles) speaking of sprinkling, says, ‘In “the sacrament of salvation, (meaning bap- “tism) when necessity compels, the shortest “ways of transacting divine matters do, by “God’s grace, confer the whole benefit.’ “And it may not be impertinent to observe,

“ that the ancients who practised immersion
 “ did usually, after the body had been
 “ plunged, apply water to the face. So far
 “ therefore as the practice of the ancients is
 “ of weight, it proves all that we contend
 “ for. We don't say that immersion is un-
 “ lawful, or a mere nullity. We say it is
 “ not necessary—that affusion is sufficient,
 “ and agreeable to the divine word ; and so
 “ said the ancient church.”

According to Dr. Lathrop, your celebrated
 author was so candid as to acknowledge that
 sprinkling, on extraordinary occasions, was
 permitted, even from the days of the Apostles.

Dr. Wall, in his history of infant baptism,
 mentions several cases, wherein persons had
 been baptized by affusion or sprinkling,
 which happened about the middle of the sec-
 ond century ; as in vol. 2, page 356. “ St.
 “ *Lawrence*, a little while before he suffered
 “ martyrdom, baptized with a pitcher of
 “ water one of his executioners, a soldier,
 “ who had been converted to the christian
 “ religion.” This instance appears very sim-
 ilar to the case of St. Paul, who baptized the
 jailer and his household in prison the same
 hour of the night in which *he* believed. “ *Ba-*
 “ *silides* is also mentioned by *Eusebius*, as hav-
 “ ing been baptized in prison.”

Page 353. “ *Novatian* became a christian
 “ about one hundred years after the Apos-
 “ tles, when, being visited with sickness, he
 “ requested to be baptized ; and, according

“ to the custom of those times, baptism was
“ administered to him in his bed, by affusion
“ or sprinkling.” The circumstances, which
attended this particular case, were such as
have rendered *it* very notorious, and have
left no doubt with respect to the mode in
which he was baptized. For *Novatian*, hav-
ing recovered his health, was afterward ap-
pointed bishop of Rome. His appointment
to this office occasioned a very serious con-
troversy ; an account of which has been pre-
served even to the present day. The law-
fulness and validity of his baptism were not
denied or disputed. But we are informed,
“ that all the clergy, and a great many of
“ the laity, were against his being ordained
“ presbyter, because it was not lawful (they
“ said) for any one who had been baptized
“ in his bed, in time of sickness, to be ad-
“ mitted to any clerical office.” Now the
reason of their objection is very obvious.
Baptism, in that age of the world, exposed
persons to the most dreadful persecutions,
especially if they undertook the work of the
gospel ministry. If therefore any person neg-
lected to be baptized, while in health, or un-
til visited with sickness, this neglect of duty
rendered his character liable to suspicion.
They were ready to suspect, that, while well,
he was influenced by the fear of reproach
and suffering ; and when sick, that he acted
under the impression of a fright ; and, con-
sequently, that there would be danger of his

apostacy, if placed in a situation of severe trial and temptation.

Accordingly, the council of *Neocæsarea*, held about eighty years after this time, established the following regulation, viz. “that
 “ he who is baptized when sick ought not
 “ to be made a priest (for his coming to the
 “ faith is not voluntary, but from necessity)
 “ unless his diligence and fidelity do after-
 “ ward prove commendable, or the scarcity
 “ of men fit for the office do require it.”

About this time one *Magnus* wrote to St. *Cyprian*, desiring to be satisfied in some matters relating to the aforesaid dispute. To his request St. *Cyprian* replied. “I would use
 “ so much modesty and humility, as not to
 “ prescribe so positively, but that every one
 “ should have the freedom of his own
 “ thoughts, and do as he thinks best.”—“For
 “ the contagion of sin is not, in the sacra-
 “ ment of salvation, washed off, by the same
 “ measures as the dirt of the skin and of the
 “ body is washed away.”—“There is no ne-
 “ cessity of soap, or of a large pool, or fish-
 “ pond. It is in another way, that the breast
 “ of a believer is washed; after another fash-
 “ ion, that the mind of man is by faith clean-
 “ sed.” And then adds the quotation that
 you have taken from Dr. Lathrop, viz. “In
 “ the sacraments of salvation, when necessity
 “ compels, the shortest ways of transacting
 “ the divine matters do, by God’s gracious
 “ dispensation, confer the whole benefit.”—

He further proceeds—"No man need therefore think otherwise, because these sick people, when they receive the grace of our Lord, have nothing but an affusion or sprinkling; whereas the holy scripture, by the prophet Ezekiel, says, *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean,*" &c.

Dr. Wall states "the aforesaid instances as some of the most ancient now extant on record; but observes, as we proceed further in reading the history of the following times, cases of sprinkling are more frequently mentioned; and that, in the fifth century, baptism was administered in France, indifferently, by immersion and aspersion."

The truth is—previously to the third century, or before Constantine the Emperour, embraced christianity, christians were constantly opposed and persecuted by the rulers and philolophers of this world. This general opposition and persecution prevented internal differences, and disposed them to unite harmoniously against the common enemy, and in defence of their common religion. They have accordingly written and transmitted to posterity but very little, concerning gospel ordinances; and, in particular, concerning the sacrament of baptism; and have commonly expressed themselves in such a manner as does not specify the mode, in which it was administered.

When we consider the peculiar circumstances of those times; that the art of printing was not then known; that but very few persons were capable of writing; that a dreadful storm of persecution raged without control; that christians were every moment liable to be deprived of their property, their liberty, their relations and friends, and even of their own life—it could not be expected, in this situation of extreme danger, anxiety, and distress, that they would be able to preserve a register of their proceedings—an exact account of their numerous baptisms, and of the mode in which they baptized; and yet we find various instances of baptism administered by sprinkling, so early as in the second century. This is a fact clearly ascertained, and universally acknowledged. It is allowed even by the baptists. The author of Ten Letters, whom you have so often quoted as an authority, concedes, “that sprinkling was practised, on extraordinary occasions, in the early ages of christianity.” It was practised, occasionally, with general consent, with universal approbation. It does not appear that there was one single church in all christendom, for more than a thousand years, that objected, or even suspected, that sprinkling was not a lawful and valid mode of baptizing.

You tell us, “the reasons alledged, why sprinkling may be substituted for immersion, are, the want of health, coldness of

“ climate, &c. and that here is a silent ac-
 “ knowledgment, that it is not the institution,
 “ the permission of Christ, but mere acciden-
 “ tal and local circumstances, which make it
 “ lawful to lay by the command of Christ,
 “ and receive in its stead the precepts and
 “ commandments of men.”

Is this a fair and candid representation of the case? Who, among the ancients or moderns, that have practised sprinkling, generally or occasionally, ever supposed that Christ commanded dipping? It has certainly been their constant opinion, that the mode of baptizing was not specified or required by Christ; that aspersion, affusion, and immersion, were equally valid.

We are sometimes told, “ that the primi-
 “ tive christians were all baptists.” But it seems they did not suppose that the mode of sprinkling was a mere mockery or nullity; or that a total dipping or immersion was absolutely essential to the sacrament of baptism. None of the ancient fathers, many of whom were learned men, and understood the original language perfectly well, ever believed, or even suspected, that the Greek word *baptizō*, always signified to dip. The validity of baptism was sometimes questioned, when administered by, or to, an improper subject, but not on the account of the *mode* of administration. The present characteristick principles of the modern baptists were evidently unknown to the ancients. They never refused to com-

mune with persons, merely because they had not been dipped; but readily admitted to their communion such as were baptized by affusion or sprinkling.

You say, page 74, "It was an early error in the church, that baptism was necessary to salvation. Hence, when it was judged that life would be endangered by immersion, the person must either lose his life by baptism, or lose his soul for the want of being baptized, or some other mode must be invented."—"Under these circumstances, man's fruitful imagination devised sprinkling, as a substitute for baptism.—Here is the origin of sprinkling as the ancients have told us." This, Sir, is an inference of your own—an inference which the ancients never avowed. St. Cyprian, who flourished about one hundred and fifty years after the Apostles, and to whose writings you have expressly referred, in order to prove the aforesaid assertion, was certainly of a very different opinion. He fully believed that sprinkling was as truly baptism as immersion. This we have clearly shown from his own unequivocal declarations. It is true, the primitive christians did not undervalue baptism. They did not despise and neglect this sacred ordinance, as many do at the present day; but considered all such unnecessary and wilful neglects as immoral and highly criminal. They viewed baptism as an incumbent duty of great im-

portance—equally important and necessary for the sickly and infirm, as for the healthy and robust—equally necessary in winter as in summer—in cold as in warm climates—in dry seasons and countries, as in places abounding with fountains and streams of water. Accordingly, they adopted, on various occasions, the mode of sprinkling; and especially in those cases where dipping was impracticable, unsafe, or inconvenient.

The ancients never suspected, that the mode of baptizing was defined by Christ, or enjoined by him. They well knew that some of the principal purifications, under the Mosaic dispensation, were performed by sprinkling, and that these sprinklings were expressly called baptisms, in the new testament. The prophet had foretold, that persons should be sprinkled with clean water. This prediction they applied to the christian baptism. Indeed it is applicable to no other institution. These were evidently some of the principal arguments, which influenced the ancient christians; and, in addition to these and similar considerations, they probably had good reasons to suppose, that the mode of sprinkling was agreeable to the practice or sentiment of the Apostles.

I have already granted, and am still ready to grant, that some of the primitive christians put too much dependence upon the ordinance of baptism. They seemed to suppose, that baptism would ensure their salva-

tion, and that none would be saved without it. The ancients enjoyed but very small advantages for acquiring religious and useful knowledge. But few could read. They had no public schools or printed books. They were of course, generally, very ignorant and superstitious. According to your opinion, they were influenced by superstition to adopt the mode of sprinkling, when sick, and when destitute of the requisites and conveniences for dipping. With equal, if not greater, propriety, I might retort and say, it was superstition that disposed so many of them to adopt the mode of dipping, on other occasions. For they were strongly disposed to overdo, with respect to the external rites and ceremonies of religion. But, Sir, with all their superstition, they were never so superstitious as to believe that the *mode* of baptizing was absolutely essential to the ordinance of baptism. They never *re-baptized* on this account; but believed that sprinkling was a proper and valid mode of baptizing, and perfectly agreeable to the original intention of Christ and nature of the institution.

Mankind are very apt to be in one extreme or the other. Superstition was characteristick of the ancients. The ancient Jews and profelytes were too superstitious. The religious rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation were expensive, burdensome, and grievous; but they never com-

plained—they were willing to do more, in these respects, than their law required—were ready to offer the most costly sacrifices, and even their own children—*their first-born for their transgression, and the fruit of their bodies for the sins of their souls.* When the Saviour was here on earth, they were careful to tithe the most trifling articles—*anise and cummin, and all manner of herbs.* With the same strictness, they observed their sabbaths, fasts and festivals. This exactness, with reference to the instituted rites of their religion, frequently disposed them to encroach upon the greater duties of morality. For while they so scrupulously “strained at a gnat, in one case, they often swallowed a camel, in the other.”

The primitive christians were not so immoral, but they were extremely superstitious. When Christ washed his disciples' feet, Peter, in the first place, objected; but being told that washing was necessary, he immediately embraced the opposite extreme. He was then anxious to be washed all over; *not his feet only, but his hands and his head.* The same Apostle understood his commission so imperfectly, that he needed a miracle, in order to convince him that it was lawful to preach the gospel unto the *uncircumcised* gentiles.

We are told that many thousands of Jews and proselytes believed in Christ. But the 21st chapter of Acts informs us, “that they *all* were zealous of the law.” They had

been baptized, but would not consent to relinquish a single article of the Mosaic institution—not even the painful rite of circumcision. How greatly alarmed and displeased, when they heard that false report concerning St. Paul, viz. “that he taught the Jews, who lived among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, they ought not to circumcise their children, neither walk according to the customs?”

Let us now enquire how Christ and his Apostles conducted toward this superstitious people. The enquiry will reflect some useful light upon the subject we have been considering. It is evident they were not allowed in any kind of immorality. But they were treated with the greatest indulgence and tenderness conceivable, relatively to the external modes and forms of their instituted rites and religious ceremonies; and with respect to such other practices as are not in themselves sinful. Each one was permitted to enjoy his own opinion, and conform to his own habitual customs, without being molested or censured.

The first inspired preachers of the gospel were peculiarly careful not to offend either Jew, or *Greek*, or the Church of God. Our Saviour told the Jews “that mercy was before sacrifice”—“that David and they who were with him, when hungry, lawfully ate the shew-bread”—“that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” These and

similar observations are equally applicable to the christian baptism. On another occasion, he observed to his disciples, "*I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*" He was unwilling to disturb their minds, and shock their faith, with such doctrines and truths as they were not prepared to receive and entertain. He, therefore, waited for the abatement of their prejudices, and the arrival of a more convenient opportunity.

Again, although Christ knew that the Romans had no equitable right to demand tribute of the Jews; yet, rather than *occasion of offence*, he procured, in an extraordinary manner, a piece of silver, in order to defray the taxes assessed on himself and Peter.

The holy Apostles conducted with the same prudent, peaceable caution. The Jews who believed, esteemed circumcision and the Mosaic customs as an unspeakable privilege, and wished to have them continued. They were accordingly gratified. Nay, in order to remove suspicion, St. Paul circumcised Timothy with his own hand. In compliance with the advice of the other Apostles, he shaved his own head and purified himself, as the law of Moses required. This happened about 27 years after that law was annulled or superseded by the gospel dispensation.

The believing gentiles considered these Jewish rites as great grievances, and requested to be excused. They also were freely in-

dulged. The apostolick language was, “ we
 “ that are strong, ought to bear the infirmi-
 “ ties of the weak, and not to please ourselves.
 “ Let every one of us please his neighbour,
 “ for his good to edification. For even
 “ Christ pleased not himself, &c.”—“ For
 “ though I be free from all men, yet have I
 “ made myself servant unto all, that I might
 “ gain the more. To the Jews I became as
 “ a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them
 “ that are under the law, as under the law,
 “ that I might gain them that are under the
 “ law; to them that are without law, as with-
 “ out law, being not without law to God,
 “ but under the law to Christ, that I might
 “ gain them that are without law. To the
 “ weak, I became as weak, that I might gain
 “ the weak. I am made all things to all men,
 “ that by all means, I might save some.”

This, Sir, is christian candour and condescension. Thus, the Apostles yielded to the ignorance, weakness, prejudices, bigotry, and superstition of mankind; in order to prevent unnecessary dissentions and separations, and *keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—that the gospel of Christ might not be frustrated or hindered, but have free course and be glorified.*

When therefore we reason from analogy, inference, or fair implication, it is natural to suppose, that Christ meant to leave the mode of baptism undecided, that his Apostles and ministers, in all succeeding generations,

might be at liberty to apply the baptismal water, in such a manner as should be most expedient, in their various circumstances. In this very respect, we discover the wisdom and kindness of our common Lord. For as christianity was designed to be an universal religion, it was proper that the rite of publick initiation should be of such a nature as might be accommodated to the condition and inclination of persons, in all ages, and nations, and climates, and seasons.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R XXIII.

SIR,

I PERCEIVE, in your letters addressed to Mr. *Anderson*, on open communion, that you define a baptist as being “one who holds immersion only to be baptism, and visible believers the only subjects.” But, Sir, how could you, consistently with this definition, assert so positively, “that during the first century, the christians were all regular baptists?—and that the origin of the pædobaptists is at once traced to about the middle of the second century?” Unhappily, for the uninformed, prejudiced, and credulous part of mankind, such pedantick, positive assertions, unaccompanied with any evidence,

often prove more effectual than the soundest reasons and most conclusive arguments ! It appears, however, that a modern baptist, with respect to the subjects, holds that infant baptism is always unlawful and invalid, even when administered by dipping. A baptist, with respect to the mode, is one who holds that a total immersion or dipping is absolutely necessary, in order to render the administration of the ordinance lawful and valid. He consequently refuses to commune with those persons, who have received baptism in any other mode, although they were adult believers, at the time of being baptized. According to this description of a baptist, I have not been able, after the most laborious and careful examination of history, to find a single church or minister of that denomination, before the twelfth century. Baptism, I have shown, was practised by sprinkling, occasionally, without opposition, in the second century. This strongly indicates, that the practice was handed down, even from the Apostles ; especially when we consider that there is no evidence to the contrary. Mere silence, with respect to infant baptism, or the mode of baptizing, during the first century, will not prove that those christians were baptists. The depressed, persecuted christians of that age were constantly engaged in other matters of greater importance, sufficient to occupy all their time and all their talents.

I am ready to admit, that the Greek church, and various other churches at the present day, who still believe in the rite of infant baptism, commonly practice dipping. The church of England also, according to their Rubrick, on ordinary occasions, formerly practised dipping; but they were not restricted to that mode, nor was it ever considered by them as essential.

It is a very common thing, in some places, even in this country, for those ministers to baptize, occasionally, by dipping, who usually administer baptism by sprinkling. A very respectable minister, in the town of Providence, more than thirty years ago, baptized three persons, on the same occasion, in three different modes, by their own particular desire. The *first* was sprinkled in the meeting-house. The congregation then proceeded to the river, *at which* the *second* had water poured upon her head, and *in which* the third was dipped. Similar instances have frequently happened in latter times. These brothers and sisters, baptized in different modes, some while infants, and others when adults, like the primitive christians, commune together in love and fellowship, at the same table of their common Lord and Master.

Agreeably to what I have observed, Mr. Worcester, of Salem, in a late publication, says, "It is a well supported fact, that in the
" first ages of christianity, and for about
" twelve or fifteen hundred years, baptism,

“ by sprinkling or affusion, was universally
 “ allowed to be scriptural and valid. Even
 “ those, who, in ordinary cases, baptized by
 “ immersion, did not deny, but admitted, the
 “ validity of baptism by sprinkling or af-
 “ fusion.”

The mode of sprinkling was also countenanced and well defended by Luther, and Calvin, and Melancthon, and other great reformers from popery; and has generally been practised by protestants, from that period to the present day. If the primitive christians had believed that the mode of dipping was absolutely requisite to the validity of baptism, no consideration could have induced them, on any occasion, to substitute sprinkling. But, viewing the mode as not fixed by Christ, and as not being essential, the practice of sprinkling was perfectly consistent with their sentiments. The same opinion and practices still prevail in those churches where the right of infant baptism is not denied.

It is very remarkable, that in those ages and countries, *where the mode of dipping has been, or still is, the most prevalent, there infant baptism has been the most generally practised, and there the mode of baptizing has not been deemed essential.* Instead, therefore, of finding *all* these people baptists, but *very few, if any,* of that denomination, are to be found among them. Dr. Wall, who was himself an advocate for dipping, tells us, “ that
 “ all christians in the world, *who never owned*

“ *the pope’s authority*, do now, and ever did, “ dip their infants, in the ordinary use.” They always baptized their infants; and, ordinarily, by dipping, but not universally, for they, occasionally, sprinkled them. The mode of dipping was of ordinary use; but the practice of infant baptism, in those churches who *were never under the influence of popery*, appears to have been *universal*, both in ancient and modern times.

We do not pretend to rest the proof of infants’ right to baptism upon historical evidence, relative to the ancient practice of the church in this respect. However, if it should appear, that the churches, soon after the Apostles, did admit the infant children of believing parents to baptism—if no account can be produced, of any church that rejected them—if no individual can be named, who pretended that the practice was unlawful, or an innovation—these facts will certainly furnish a very weighty argument in favour of the aforesaid doctrine.

Baptism is an important transaction of a publick nature. Those christians, who lived, and wrote in the earliest times after the Apostles, must have known what *their* practice was, with reference to the infant children of believers. The testimony of these ancient writers, as historians or witnesses, respecting this plain matter of fact, justly claims our most impartial and attentive consideration. It is not, however, my intention to write a com-

plete history of infant baptism. A history of this kind has been written a century ago, by Dr. Wall, a very correct and judicious historian. This history is highly approved and recommended by the best judges, as being a work of great merit, candour and impartiality.

On February 9th, 1705, the clergy of England, assembled in general convention, “*ordered*, that the thanks of this house be given to Mr. Wall, vicar of Shoreham in Kent, for the learned and excellent book he hath lately written concerning infant baptism; and that a committee be appointed to acquaint him with the same.” Dr. Atterbury, a leading member in said convention, says, “that the history of infant baptism was a book, for which the author deserved the thanks, not of the English clergy alone, but of all the christian churches.” Mr. *Whiston* also, a very learned man, well acquainted with the writings of the Fathers of the four first centuries, and a professed baptist, in his address to the people of that denomination, declares to them, “that Dr. *Wall's* history of *infant baptism*, as to facts, appeared to him most accurately done, and might be depended on by the baptists themselves.” *Mem. of his life*, part 2, page 461.

The aforesaid history is still extant in two volumes. The same author has since published another volume, which is a defence of the two former volumes, against the reflections of Dr. Gale and others. In these publica-

tions, he has favoured us with the testimony and sayings of the ancient Fathers, with respect to infant baptism, a few of which I shall produce, as authorities on the present occasion.

Justin Martyr, who wrote about 40 years after the apostolick age, says, “We have not received the carnal but spiritual circumcision, by baptism. And it is enjoined on all persons to receive it in the same way.” He here evidently considers baptism as being in the place of circumcision, and, consequently, like that ancient rite, designed for infants as well as for adults. In one of his apologies for the christians, he observes, “Several persons among us, of 60 or 70 years old, who were made disciples to Christ from their childhood, do continue uncorrupt.”—*Who were made disciples.*—Take notice; for he makes use of the very same word that was used in the commission given to the Apostles. *Disciple all nations, baptizing them, &c.* Now, if infant children were made disciples, they were undoubtedly baptized. Justin wrote about 105 years after the ascension of Christ. Those persons whom he mentions were then 70 years old; and consequently born and made disciples, in the times of the Apostles.

Irenæus, who wrote about 67 years after the Apostles, and was then an aged man, says, concerning Christ, “he came to save all persons who by him are regenerated (or bap-

“tized) unto God, *infants*, little ones, youths
“and elderly persons.” He speaks of *infants*
and *little ones* as being regenerated. It is
evident from his own words that he had
reference to their baptism; for he tells us,
“When Christ gave his Apostles the com-
“mand of *regenerating* unto God, he said, go
“and teach all nations *baptizing* them.” The
ancient Fathers as customarily used the
word regeneration for baptism, as the
church of England now use the word christ-
ening. Justin Martyr, whose name and testi-
mony we have already mentioned, speaking
of some particular persons who had been
baptized, says, “they are regenerated in the
“same way of regeneration, in which we
“have been regenerated, for they are *washed*
“with water in the name of the Father, and
“of the Son, and of *the Holy Ghost*.” In this
short sentence, the word regeneration or re-
generated is put for baptism no less than
three times.

It is a matter of *no* importance in the present
dispute, whether the primitive Fathers used
the aforesaid word properly or improperly.
We certainly know in what sense they did
use it, and this is all the information needed.
I would however repeat a former observa-
tion, viz. that by a common figure, the
thing signified is often substituted for the
sign, and the sign for the thing signified.
Thus, the Abrahamic covenant is sometimes
put, by God himself, for circumcision; and

circumcision, the sign and token thereof, is sometimes put for the covenant. Accordingly, baptism has been put for regeneration; and regeneration, for baptism.

We have already shown, that the Jews were in the habit of baptizing the Gentile profelytes, even before the time of John and of Christ. They considered these profelytes as being, by baptism, born the children of Abraham; and therefore expressed their baptism, by regeneration. Accordingly, Christ and his Apostles, on some particular occasions, adopted a similar language. Our Saviour said to Nicodemus, *except one be born again—except he be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.* By this new birth, Christ evidently had reference to water baptism, as truly as to the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The Apostle Paul styles baptism, *the washing of regeneration.* The ancients commonly expressed baptism with water, by regeneration; for they considered this external sacrament as a sign of internal, spiritual renovation and purification. Irenæus expressly calls baptism regeneration, and says that *infants* were regenerated, that is, baptized. His testimony is plain and full; and cannot be doubted by any person acquainted with the phraseology and writings of the Fathers. He mentions not only old persons and youths, but also little ones, and even *infants.* This Irenæus was bishop of Lyons in France. According

to Mr. *Dodwell*, he was born before the death of St. John—was brought up in Asia, where that Apostle had lived and died. He was acquainted with Polycarp; and in his younger years, had often heard him preach. Polycarp was John's disciple, had been chosen by him to be bishop of Smyrna—and probably that Angel of the Church, so highly commended in the 2d chapter of Rev. Irenæus and those christians who lived in an age so near the Apostles, and in a place where one of them had so lately resided, could not be ignorant—they must have known what the apostolick practice was, with respect to infant baptism—a matter of the most notorious and publick nature.

Dr. Lathrop observes, “ that *Tertullian*, who flourished about one hundred years after the Apostles, gives a plain testimony, that the church admitted infants to baptism in his time. It is true, he advises to *delay* their baptism; not because it was *unlawful*, for he allows of it in cases of necessity; but because the *sponsors* were often brought into a snare; and because he imagined that sins, committed *after baptism*, were next to unpardonable. He accordingly advises that unmarried persons be kept from this ordinance, until they either marry or are confirmed in continence. His advising to a delay, supposes that infant baptism was practised, for otherwise there would have been no room for the advice. He does not speak of it as an *innovation*,

which he would certainly have done, had it *begun* to have been practised in his time. His words rather imply the contrary. His speaking of *sponsors*, who engaged for the education of the infants that were baptized, shows that there had been such a custom. And his asking, "why that innocent age *made such haste* to baptism," supposes that infants had usually been baptized, soon after their birth. So that he fully enough witnesses to the *fact*, that it had been the practice of the church to baptize infants. And his advice to delay their baptism, till they were grown up and married, was one of those odd and singular notions for which this father was very remarkable."

This quotation agrees well with the account given of *Tertullian*, by Dr. Wall and other approved writers. *Tertullian* was evidently a man of abilities and learning, and in some respects an useful writer. His integrity and veracity were never questioned. But as has been hinted, he held to some strange and peculiar notions. He was not deemed perfectly orthodox by the ancient christians. Being a person of warm imagination, he expressed himself, very strongly, on different subjects, at different times; and some have thought, in a manner that was not consistent. Some of the later baptists have even pretended that he denied infant baptism. But these considerations do not disqualify him as a wit-

ness in the present case. Instead of invalidating, they serve to confirm his testimony.

Dr. Gill says, that Tertullian is the first man who *mentions* infant baptism, and speaks against it; and infers that it had not come into use before his time. To this, Mr. Clark, in his answer, replies, “ So he is the first man, “ I suppose, that mentions the baptism of un- “ married people, virgins, and widows, and “ speaks against it, and as earnestly pleads for “ its delay till the danger of temptation is “ past; till marriage, or the abatement of “ lust. But will it thence follow, that the “ baptism of such unmarried persons did not “ obtain in the church till *Tertullian’s* time? “ Or that it then first began to be in use? “ Our author might as reasonably have in- “ ferred the latter opinion, as the former. “ But the very words, in which he expresses “ his advice against baptizing infants, plainly “ imply that it was a common practice. Af- “ ter all, what is it that *Tertullian* has said “ against infant baptism? He has given it as “ his judgment, that it would be more profita- “ ble to defer their baptism, until they come “ to riper years, and were able to understand “ something of its nature and design; but he “ does not, like the anti-pædobaptists, con- “ demn it as unlawful; which he would have “ done, if it had been a novel practice—an “ innovation, contrary to the rule of scrip- “ ture, or without the approbation or direc- “ tion of the Apostles. On the contrary, he

“ allows it in case of necessity, of sickness,
 “ and danger of death. Dr. Gill, instead of
 “ saying, that Tertullian was the first man,
 “ who mentioned infant baptism, and spoke
 “ against it, ought to have said, that he was
 “ the *only man*, in all antiquity, whose wri-
 “ tings have come down to us, who has said
 “ any thing at all against the practice of bap-
 “ tizing infants.” The very advice, however,
 which he gave, plainly shows, that infant bap-
 tism was then commonly practised. He does
 not intimate, that the practice was of human
 invention, or not authorized by the Apostles.
 His private opinion, with respect to the ex-
 pediency of delaying baptism in several cas-
 es, and the reasons which he offered, are
 nothing to us. We have only cited him as
 a voucher to an ancient fact; and the testi-
 mony which he has given affords clear and
 incontestable proof of said fact, viz. that in-
 fants were baptized in his times.

Origen, who flourished in the beginning of
 the third century, and was for some time
 contemporary with *Tertullian*, in his 8th
 homily on Levit. 12, observes, “ David,
 “ speaking concerning the pollution of in-
 “ fants, says, *I was conceived in iniquity, and in*
 “ *sin did my mother bring me forth.* Let it be
 “ considered what is the reason, that whereas
 “ the baptism of the church is given for for-
 “ giveness, infants also, by the usage of the
 “ church, are baptized; when if there were
 “ nothing in infants, which wanted forgive-

“ nefs and mercy, the grace of baptism would
 “ be needless to them. And again, infants
 “ are baptized for the remission of sin. Of
 “ what sin? Or when have they sinned? Or
 “ how can any reason of the laver hold good
 “ in their case? But according to that sense
 “ before mentioned, none is free from pollu-
 “ tion, though his life be only the length of
 “ one day upon the earth. It is for this rea-
 “ son that infants are baptized, because by
 “ the sacrament of baptism, our pollution is
 “ taken away.” In another treatise, he
 says, “ the church had a tradition, or com-
 mand from the Apostles, to give baptism
 “ to infants; for they, to whom the divine
 “ mysteries were committed, knew that there
 “ is, in all persons, the natural pollution of
 “ sin, which ought to be washed away by
 “ water and the spirit; by reason of which
 “ pollution, the body itself is also called *the*
 “ *body of sin,*” &c. &c.

These testimonies of *Origen* are full and unequivocal. They put the matter in debate beyond all reasonable doubt, if any credit can be given to them; and no reason appears, why they should not be credited. It is true they are taken from Latin translations. *Origen* wrote in the Greek language. But the fidelity of the translators and authenticity of these passages, have been sufficiently vindicated by Dr. Wall, even to the entire satisfaction of all impartial enquirers. None

will object, but those persons who are disposed to cavil.

I perceive that you have admitted the aforesaid facts; but have made an unusual outcry against the tradition and order from the Apostles, mentioned by Origen. There is, I suspect, more policy and popularity in your remarks, than real weight. It will not do for us to turn those weapons against the ancient Fathers and Holy Apostles, which the protestants have used with so much success, in their disputes with the papists.

Let us hear what St. Paul says, with respect to traditions. 2 Theff. ii. 15. "Therefore, brethren, *stand fast, and hold the traditions* which ye have been taught, whether by *word, or our epistle.*" And in the 3d chap. 6th verse, he says, "Now we *command* you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the *tradition* which he received of us." So also in 1 Corin. 11th chap. 2d verse. "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the *ordinances* (the *traditions, paradoseis*) as I delivered them to you." The Apostle was here speaking of christian ordinances, which he calls *traditions*. The original word signifies *traditions*, and is so rendered by our translators in the other aforesaid passages.

Thus, Sir, you see in what a solemn manner—in the name of Christ, the holy Apostle

charged the primitive christians, to hold and keep the traditions—not merely such as had been written by the pen of inspiration, but also those which were delivered to them by word, or in an oral and verbal manner, and with particular reference to the rules and ordinances of the gospel. The traditions and commandments of mere men, which pretend to divine authority, are to be rejected. But those traditions are not to be treated with sneer and ridicule, which were delivered by the Apostles to the primitive christians—recorded and authenticated by the ancient Fathers—and transmitted down to us, by the faithful historian.

Origen has expressly informed us, that infant baptism was practised in his time. With respect to this matter of fact, *Origen* was certainly a competent witness; and he had every opportunity and advantage for knowing what had been the practice of his predecessors and even of the Apostles. Many of the ancient Fathers were illiterate, and descended from heathen parents; and being the first of their family who embraced christianity, must have been baptized when adults. But *Origen* was one of the most learned men of the age. He was born and educated at Alexandria in *Egypt*, but travelled into *Rome*, and *Greece*, and *Capadocia*, and *Arabia*. He resided for some time in several of the most eminent churches, and spent the greatest part of his life in *Syria* and *Palestine*. His

ancestors were christians. *Eusebius* tells us, that his forefathers had been christians, for several generations. His father was martyred, in the persecution under *Severus*.

It is very remarkable, that his pedigree should have been so accurately ascertained. The occasion was this: *Porphyry*, a great enemy to christianity, had represented the christians as being an ignorant people, destitute of science; but not being able to conceal the repute of *Origen*, for his uncommon skill in human literature, pretended that he had been at first a heathen, and had learned their philosophy. In order to confute this falsehood, *Eusebius* enquired into his ancestry, and set forth his christian descent.

Origen was born in the year of our Lord 185, that is, 85 years after the Apostles. He was 17 years old when his father suffered martyrdom. He had himself, undoubtedly, been baptized in his infancy; and must have been informed concerning the practice of the Apostles, respecting the baptizing of infants; for his grandfather, or at least his great-grandfather, lived in the apostolick times, and they both were christians. This is the man, who has expressly declared, that infants were baptized in his day, and that the church was directed by an order or tradition from the Apostles, to baptize them. His circumstances were such as afforded him all the necessary and suitable means for obtaining information. We have no reason to

suspect his credibility as a witness; and nothing can be more unreasonable, than to reject or treat his testimony with contempt. It is a circumstance worthy of our *very particular notice*, that Origen and the other ancient Fathers do not speak of infant baptism as being a practice that was denied or opposed by any one. They mention it as a practice generally known and approved, and for the purpose of illustrating and confirming other points that were then disputed.

I shall now produce the testimony of the blessed martyr *Cyprian*, who was for some time contemporary with *Origen*; and next to him, the most noted christian writer of that age. *Cyprian* was constituted bishop or minister of Carthage, in the year 248, and *Origen* died in the year 252. The testimony of this ancient saint, to which I now have an immediate reference, was occasioned by a question proposed to him, by one *Fidus*, a *presbyter*, or minister in the country, viz. *Whether an infant might be baptized before he was eight days old?* The reason of his doubt, it seems, was an article in the law respecting circumcision, which, under the old testament dispensation, required that infants should be circumcised on the eighth day from their birth. Pursuant to the aforesaid question, an ecclesiastical council of 66 bishops, having convened at Carthage, A. D. 253, *Cyprian* proposed a resolution of the following import, viz. "that an infant might

“ be baptized on the second or third day, or
 “ at any time after its birth; and that cir-
 “ cumcision, besides being a sacramental
 “ rite, had something in it of a typical nature;
 “ and particularly, in the circumstance of
 “ being administered on the eighth day,
 “ which ceased at the coming of Christ, who
 “ has given us baptism, the spiritual circum-
 “ cision; in which ordinance, we are not
 “ thus restricted, with respect to the age or
 “ time of administration.” To this resolu-
 tion the council agreed unanimously; as it
 appears from the testimony of *Cyprian* in his
 epistle to *Fidus*, from which I shall extract a
 few paragraphs, in order to show the senti-
 ments of those venerable and ancient saints
 relatively to infant baptism.—The inscrip-
 tion is as follows:

“ *Cyprian* and the rest of the colleagues,
 “ who are present in council, in num-
 “ ber sixty-six, to *Fidus* our brother,
 “ Greeting.”

“ As to the case of infants, whereas you
 “ judge that they must not be baptized within two
 “ or three days after they are born; and that the
 “ law of the ancient circumcision is to be observed;
 “ so that you think none should be baptized and
 “ sanctified, until the eighth day after their birth;
 “ we were all in our assembly of a quite dif-
 “ ferent opinion. For in this matter, with
 “ respect to that which you thought fitting to
 “ be done, there was not one of your mind.
 “ But all of us rather judged, that the grace

“ and mercy of God is not to be denied to
“ any person born. For whereas our Lord
“ in his gospel says, *the Son of Man came not to*
“ *destroy men's souls (or lives) but to save them.*—
“ That the eighth day, appointed to be ob-
“ served in the Jewish circumcision, was a
“ type going before in a shadow or resem-
“ blance, but on Christ's coming was fulfilled
“ in the substance; for because the eighth
“ day, that is the next after the sabbath, was
“ to be the day on which the Lord was to
“ rise from the dead, and quicken us, and
“ give us the spiritual circumcision. This
“ eighth day, that is, the next to the sabbath,
“ or the Lord's day, went before in the type,
“ which type ceased when the substance
“ came, and the spiritual circumcision was
“ given to us. So that we judge, no person
“ is to be hindered from obtaining the grace,
“ (that is of *baptism*) by the law which is now
“ established; and that the spiritual circum-
“ cision ought not to be restrained by the
“ circumcision which was according to the
“ flesh; but that all are to be admitted to the
“ grace of Christ; since *Peter*, speaking in
“ the Acts of the Apostles, says, *the Lord*
“ *hath shown me that no person is to be called*
“ *common or unclean.* This, therefore, dear
“ brother, was our opinion in the assembly,
“ that it is not for us to hinder any person
“ from baptism, and from the grace of God,
“ who is merciful, and kind, and affectionate
“ to all. Which rule, as it holds for all, so

“ we think it is more especially to be ob-
 “ served in reference to infants, and those
 “ that are newly born, to whom our help and
 “ the divine mercy is rather to be granted,
 “ because by their weeping and wailing at
 “ their first entrance into the world, they do
 “ intimate nothing so much as that they im-
 “ plore compassion,” &c.

I presume, Sir, that you never read the result of this council; for your pretended information, it seems, was derived from an “ ancient dialogue revised.” How strangely have the plainest matters of fact been misunderstood and misrepresented!—The council at Carthage was not designed to establish the practice of infant baptism, or to consider and decide the question of their right to the ordinance; concerning this they entertained no doubt. That infants ought to be baptized, was taken for granted both by *Fidus*, and by *Cyprian*, and by the council of 66 bishops. It is true *Fidus*, who proposed the case, supposed that their baptism could not be administered with propriety, before the *eighth day*, to which circumcision had been restricted. But the council were unanimously of a different opinion, as it appears from their decision. The proceedings of the aforesaid council are particularly stated by Saint *Cyprian*, in an *epistle* which he wrote about 150 years after the Apostles. And, “ *there is no*
 “ *piece, says Dr. Wall, in all antiquity, that can*

“be proved more certainly to be genuine, than
“this.”

It is impossible that infant baptism should have been an innovation. The supposition is utterly incredible. There was not, we are expressly told, one man in that assembly, who supposed it necessary that baptism should be omitted until the eighth day; and certainly none could think it ought not to be administered to infants at all. It was an unanimous vote, that infants might be baptized lawfully and properly, even on the second or third day after their birth. This general consent sufficiently proves, that the right of infant baptism had been established and approved by long custom. Besides, many of these ministers were probably 60 or 70 years old, and had been baptized in their infancy.—Their parents or grand parents undoubtedly lived in the first century, and, it is likely, were well acquainted with the practice of the Apostles themselves.

Saint *Ambrose*, who wrote about 274 years after the Apostles, declares expressly, “that infant baptism was practised in his
“time, and in the time of the Apostles.”

Saint *Chrysostom* observes “that persons
“may be baptized either in their infancy, in
“middle age, or in old age.”—He tells us,
“infants were baptized, although they had
“no sin; and that the sign of the cross was
“made upon their foreheads at baptism.”—
Saint *Hierome* says, “if infants be not bap-

“tized, the sin of omitting their baptism is laid to the parent’s charge.”—Saint *Austin*, who wrote at the same time, about 280 years after the Apostles, speaks “of infant baptism as one of those practices which was not *instituted by any council, but had always been in use. The whole church of Christ, he informs us, had constantly held that infants were baptized for the forgiveness of sin.*”—“That he had never read or heard of any *Christian, Catholic or Sectary, who held otherwise.*”—“That no christian, of any sort, ever denied it to be useful or necessary.” “If any one,” saith he, “should ask for divine authority in this matter, though that, which the whole church practises, and which has not been instituted by councils, but was ever in use, may be believed, very reasonably, to be a thing delivered or ordered by the Apostles, yet we may, besides, take a true estimate, how much the sacrament of baptism does avail infants, by the circumcision which God’s former people received.”

No one of these ancient Fathers ever wrote directly in favour of, or against, infant baptism. In their various discourses and writings, they often mention it, occasionally and transiently, when discoursing on some other subject.—They mention it as a general practice of universal notoriety, about which there was no controversy, in order to confute some prevailing heresy, or establish cer-

tain doctrines, that were then disputed. Similar testimonies might easily be produced from the writings of many other ancient witnesses, but this would unnecessarily add to the prolixity of the present work. I will therefore conclude, by stating very briefly, the incontestible and conclusive evidence in proof of infant baptism, arising out of the well known *Pelagian* controversy respecting original sin, which happened about 300 years after the Apostles.

Pelagius held, that infants were born free from any natural and sinful defilements. The chief opposers of him and his adherents were Saint *Hicrome*, and Saint *Austin*, who constantly urged, very closely, in all their writings upon the subject, the following argument, viz. “*That infants are, by all christians, acknowledged to stand in need of baptism, which must be in them for original sin, since they have no other.*” “If they have no sin, why are they then baptized, according to the rule of the church, for the forgiveness of sins? Why are they washed in the laver of regeneration, if they have no pollution?” *Pelagius*, and also *Celestius*, one of his principal abettors, were extremely puzzled and embarrassed with this argument. They knew not how to evade or surmount its force, but by involving themselves in greater absurdities and difficulties. Some persons aggravated the supposed error, by charging upon them the denial of infant baptism, as a conse-

quence that followed from their tenet. Pelagius disclaimed the slanderous imputation with abhorrence, declaring that he was accused falsely. In the confession of faith, Pelagius then exhibited, which Dr. Wall has recited, he owns, “*that baptism ought to be administered to infants, with the same sacramental words which are used in the case of adult persons.*”—He vindicates himself in the strongest terms, saying, “*that men slander him as if he denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, and did promise the kingdom of heaven to any person without the redemption of Christ; and affirms that he never heard of any, not even the most impious heretick, that would say such a thing of infants.*” Now these difficulties would have been instantly removed, and the battery, which so greatly annoyed them, been demolished at once, by only denying that infants were to be baptized. But they did not suggest or entertain any doubt at all respecting this doctrine. *Pelagius* readily avowed, in the most explicit manner, the uncontested right, and the established immemorial practice of infant baptism. *Celestius* also confessed, “*that infants were to be baptized according to the rule of the universal church.*”

One of these men was born and educated in Britain, and the other in Ireland. They both lived a long time at Rome, the centre of the world and place to which all people resorted. *Celestius* settled at Jerusalem, and *Pelagius* travelled over all the principal

churches of Europe, Asia and Africa. If there had been any number of churches, or a single church, in any part of the world, not only in that, but in the two preceding ages, who denied the baptism of infants, these learned, sagacious persons must have known or heard of it; and certainly they would have mentioned it, in order to check the triumph of their opponents, and to wrest from them that argument, by which, above all others, they were most grievously pressed. It is evident there was no society of baptists then in the world, nor had there been any of that denomination, within the memory of man. The confession of *Pelagius* and *Celestius* amounts almost to demonstration. It proves, beyond all reasonable doubt, that infant baptism had universally obtained, and had always been practised among christians, even from the apostolick times.

Dr. Wall, who enjoyed the best advantages for being acquainted with the history of infant baptism, and who made this the principal subject of his studies and enquiries, briefly sums up the evidence on both sides, in the following words: “ Lastly, for the
 “ first four hundred years, there appears
 “ only one man, *Tertullian*, who advised the
 “ delay of infant baptism in some cases, and
 “ one *Gregory*, who did *perhaps* practise such
 “ delay in the case of his own children; but
 “ no society of men so thinking or so prac-
 “ tising; or any one man saying it was un-

“lawful to baptize infants. So in the next
 “seven hundred years, there is not so much
 “as *one* man to be found, who either spoke
 “for or practised any such delay; but all the
 “contrary. And when about the year one
 “thousand one hundred and thirty, one sect
 “among the Waldenses or Albigenses de-
 “clared against the baptizing of infants, as
 “*being incapable of salvation*, the main body of
 “that people rejected their opinion; and
 “they of them who held that opinion, quick-
 “ly dwindled away and disappeared, there
 “being no more persons heard of, holding
 “that tenet, until the rising of the *German*
 “anti-pædobaptists in the year 1522.”

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R XXIV.

SIR,

I HAVE had occasion, several times, to
 mention the vague and indefinite manner in
 which you have used the word *baptists*. But
 in your “miniature history” you have adopt-
 ed a sense entirely new, which I never read
 or heard of before. You tell us from Dr.
Mosheim, “that the true source of all the
 “peculiarities now to be found in the re-
 “ligious doctrine and discipline of the Men-
 “nonites (or baptists in the north or Europe)

“ is to be found in the following maxim, viz.
 “ that the kingdom of Christ, or visible church,
 “ which he had established on earth, was an assem-
 “ bly of saints, and ought therefore to be inaccessi-
 “ ble to the wicked and unrighteous, and also ex-
 “ empt from all those institutions, which human
 “ prudence suggests to oppose the progress of ini-
 “ quity, or correct and reform transgressors.”

From the aforesaid maxim, different persons have deduced different principles and practices. Mosheim does not intimate, as you have asserted, that all those persons who adopted this maxim, were *baptists*. He does not pretend, as you have done, that the *Waldenses*, and *Wickliffites*, and *Hussites*, were *baptists*. He knew they never had denied the right of infant baptism, or held to the necessity of dipping. And thus it is with many at the present day, who have embraced the same maxim, or sentiments of a similar nature. They still continue conscientiously in the practice of baptizing infants. But Dr. Mosheim says, “ that the distinguishing
 “ principles of the *Mennonites* at this day, flow
 “ from the aforesaid doctrine concerning the
 “ church.”—“ That it is in consequence of
 “ this doctrine (or maxim) that *they admit none*
 “ *to the sacrament of baptism, but persons who are*
 “ *come to the full use of reason.*”—That “ it is
 “ in consequence of the same doctrine, that
 “ *they neither admit civil rulers into their com-*
 “ *munion, nor allow any of their members to*
 “ *perform the functions of magistracy; for*

“ where there are no malefactors, magistrates
 “ are useless. Hence also they pretend to
 “ deny the lawfulness of repelling force by force,
 “ and consider war, in all its shapes, as unchristian
 “ and unjust. For as those who are perfectly
 “ holy can neither be provoked by
 “ injuries, nor commit them, they do not
 “ need the force of arms, either for the
 “ purpose of resentment or defence.”—Ac-
 “ cording to this principle, there are no trans-
 “ gressions in the kingdom of Christ, and
 “ consequently no occasion for the authori-
 “ ty of the judge.”—“ The members of a
 “ holy church can neither dissemble nor
 “ deceive; they accordingly refuse to confirm
 “ their testimony by oath,” &c.

These inferences, which, we are told, the
 Mennonites admitted, were disavowed by the
 Waldenses in general. It is true, Mosheim
 tells us, “ that the Mennonites are not entire-
 “ ly mistaken, when they boast their descent
 “ from the Waldenses, Petrobrussians, and
 “ other ancient sects, who are usually con-
 “ sidered as *witnesses of the truth*, in the times
 “ of universal darkness and superstition.”
 But if the Mennonites, who were baptists,
 descended from the Waldenses, this does not
 prove that the Waldenses were baptists. If
 the inhabitants of *Sedgwick* are baptists, this
 will not prove that the people of New-Eng-
 land, from whom they descended, are uni-
 versally or generally of the same denomina-
 tion. The account given by Dr. Mosheim

is perfectly consistent with what Dr. Wall has observed, viz. “ that there was one sect
“ of the Waldenses who declared against the
“ baptizing of infants, but the main body of
“ that people rejected their opinion.”

How could you represent “ Dr. Mosheim,
“ Dr. Maclain, and President Edwards, as
“ testifying that the Waldenses, Hussites, and
“ Wickliffites, were essentially the same with
“ the baptists of latter times; or that they all
“ were what we call baptists.” The assertion is wholly without foundation: Those learned men whom you have named, never said nor intimated that these ancient *witnesses of the truth* denied infant baptism, or held to the necessity of dipping.—But they were *baptists*, forsooth, according to your new fangled definition of the word, because they adopted a certain *maxim*, respecting the purity of the church, which, Dr. Mosheim says, disposed the *Mennonites* to admit none but adults to the sacrament of baptism. Strange sophistry!

It is true, President Edwards supposed that the Waldenses derived their name from the vallies of Piedmont; and that this was the place, from whence they originated. But he never said nor suspected, that the ancient inhabitants of those vallies were baptists. He considered them as holding the primitive doctrines of christianity; and in his history of redemption, mentions Mr. Toplady as being of the same opinion. He

points out very particularly from an old confession of faith, and other authentic testimonies, their leading and peculiar sentiments, and especially as they differed from the opinion and practice of the Romish church. But this great and learned man does not intimate that they denied or neglected infant baptism. He found no such article in their creed.

Dr. Wall says, expressly, “ that the present
 “ Waldenses, or Vandois in Piedmont, do
 “ practise infant baptism, and they were
 “ found in the practice of it, when the pro-
 “ testants of Luther’s reformation, sent to
 “ know their state and doctrine, and to con-
 “ fer with them; and they themselves do
 “ say that their fathers never practised other-
 “ wise; and this they prove from an old book
 “ of theirs called the Spiritual Almanack, in
 “ which infant baptism is owned. And *Perin*,
 “ their historian, mentions the reason of the
 “ contrary report; viz. *That their ancestors, be-*
 “ *ing constrained for several hundred years to suf-*
 “ *fer their children to be baptized, by the priests of*
 “ *the church of Rome, they deferred their baptism*
 “ *as long as they could, because they had in detesta-*
 “ *tion those human inventions that were added to*
 “ *the sacrament, which they held to be a pollution*
 “ *thereof. And forasmuch, as their own pastors*
 “ *were many times abroad, employed in the ser-*
 “ *vice of their churches, they could not have bap-*
 “ *tism administered to their children by their own*
 “ *ministers. For this cause they kept them long,*

“from baptism, which the popish priests perceiv-
 “ing, took notice of, and charged them with the
 “aforesaid slander.”

“There are many other confessions of
 “theirs,” says Dr. Wall, “of like import,
 “produced by *Perin, Baxter, Wills, &c.*
 “This is the account the Waldenses give of
 “themselves, some of which seem to have
 “been published about 200 years ago.”—
 which would be 300 years from the present
 time.—*History of Infant Baptism, 2d vol.*
 page 221.

Historians are not agreed as to the reason
 or occasion, why this people have been call-
 ed Waldenses. It is, however, not very
 material in the present dispute, whether they
 derived their name from Waldo or Waldus,
 the supposed founder of that sect, according
 to Mosheim and others, or from the vallies
 of Piedmont, the place where it is pretended
 they lived, and from which, some say, they
 originated.

You tell us that Dr. Mosheim says, “the
 “true origin of that sect, which acquired the
 “denomination of anabaptists by administer-
 “ing anew the ordinance of baptism to those
 “who came over to their communion, and
 “derived that of Mennonites from the fa-
 “mous man to whom they owe the greatest
 “part of their present felicity, is hid in the
 “remote depths of antiquity, and is of con-
 “sequence extremely difficult to be ascer-
 “tained.” Here you stop, in the very midst

of a sentence, and observe, " Dr. Mosheim, " as learned an historian, though not so can- " did a one, as the science of letters can " boast, bears positive testimony that the " origin of the baptists is hidden in the re- " mote depths of antiquity." I wish, Sir, you had been candid enough to have stated the reasons of the aforesaid difficulty and uncertainty, with respect to the origin of the anabaptists, as mentioned by that learned historian, in the very words which immediately follow your quotation.—He says, " this un- " certainty *will not appear surprizing*, when it " is considered, that this sect started up, all of " a sudden, in several countries at the same " point of time, under leaders of different " talents and *different intentions*, and at the " very time when the first contests of the re- " formers with the Roman Pontiffs, *drew the " attention of the world, and employed the pens of " the learned in such a manner, as to render all " other objects and incidents almost matters of in- " difference.*"

The anabaptists, concerning whom Mosheim is here speaking, were not those who appeared in the twelfth century and soon disappeared. He had particular reference to the German anabaptists, who made their appearance in the sixteenth century. The uncertainty, which he mentions, respecting the origin of this sect, does not relate to the *time when*, but to the *place where* they first

made their appearance, and to the people from whom they descended.

Again, "It is difficult," he says, "to determine, with certainty, the particular spot that gave birth to that seditious and pestilential sect of anabaptists, whose tumultuous and desperate attempts were equally pernicious to the cause of religion and civil interests of mankind. Whether they first arose in *Switzerland, Germany, or the Netherlands*, is, as yet, a matter of debate, whose decision is of no great importance. It is most probable, that several persons of this odious class made their appearance at the same time, in different countries; and we may *fix this period* soon after the dawn of the reformation in Germany, when Luther arose to set bounds to the ambition of Rome," &c.

Dr. Mosheim does not pretend, as you have insinuated, "that the sect of the baptists existed before the days of Luther and Calvin, and that they lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe," &c. This, Sir, is a gross misrepresentation, pursuant to your new fangled definition of a baptist. According to that learned historian, as we have already observed, "there existed before the days of Luther and Calvin, many persons who adhered tenaciously to a certain doctrine or maxim," relative to the purity of the church. Some of these persons, he informs us, became baptists, at

the very commencement of the reformation, but, in general, they did not deny infant baptism; but have continued in the belief and practice of it, even to the present day.

It appears from your own concessions, that if there were any baptists before the days of Luther and Calvin, they lay closely concealed in their *hiding places*—secreted in *inaccessible vallies*, behind *impassable mountains*. And you tell us, “When the contest between the
“Romanists, and Luther, and his associates,
“first drew the attention of the world, the
“baptists came out of their hiding places.” Such positive assertions need positive proof; but you have produced none. You have not named a single church, or minister, or private individual of that denomination. Your pretended evidence is merely conjectural, or of the negative kind. It would not be admitted, in any other case, even by yourself; and in the present, it proves nothing but the extreme straits and difficulties, to which you are reduced. It is much more likely that those persons suddenly altered their opinion, and commenced baptists at the very time when they made their appearance. We could easily mention instances, even in our own country, of large numbers—the *greatest* part of a parish or town, who have been as suddenly converted, sometimes to the methodists’ and sometimes to the baptists’ principles.

Again, you tell us, “that the Lutherans and Baptists, as might have been expected, fell out by the way, and Calvin, if not Luther, warmly opposed them.” It is probably true, as you have stated, “that the baptists were disappointed in Luther.” But you are greatly mistaken, in supposing, “that the baptists were favoured with clearer gospel light, and wished to carry the reformation further than Luther was appointed to accomplish.” Luther and Calvin plainly foresaw the dreadful excesses into which the baptists were about to plunge, and faithfully warned them of the danger; and happy, happy for that people, if they had hearkened to their prudent and friendly advice. This would have prevented them from committing those vile and shocking enormities, which fixed an everlasting stigma on the mad men of Munster, and deluged Germany with blood. I do not, however, consider the modern baptists implicated in those atrocious transactions, but view them as innocent. My only intention is, to correct your mistake, and repel your defamatory insinuations, with respect to Luther and Calvin, those ancient reformers, who are not here to speak in their own defence.

Again, “we are told,” you say, “in the Appendix to Mosheim’s Church History, that one of the remarkable things which took place in the second century, was the baptizing of infants, it being never known

“before as a christian ordinance for them.” I have examined the aforesaid Appendix, and can find no such assertion, nor even implication. You have strangely and very unaccountably misapprehended and misrepresented the real state of facts. The learned authors of the Appendix have not said nor intimated, that the baptizing of infants was then instituted, or introduced, or “that it then took place; or that it was never before known as a christian ordinance for them.” They distinguished very carefully and properly between those things which were known to have been *introduced* or *established* in the second century, and those things which were known to have been *used* or *practised* in that century. As for example, they say “the custom of praying toward the east was *introduced* in the second century.” But “that infant baptism and sponsors were *used* in this century.” If infant baptism was *used* in the second century, it was undoubtedly *used* in the *first*, for some of the Apostles lived until the second century. Besides, several of the ancient fathers expressly assert, “that the baptism of infants never was introduced or established by any council or human authority, but had always been in use.” Origen, Ambrose, and Austin; “affirm that the baptizing of infants was ordered by the Apostles, and practised in their time.” There is no account of any church or society of men, who ever denied

the right of infant baptism, before the twelfth century. "About the year eleven hundred and thirty, one sect of the Albigenses declared against the baptizing of infants, as being incapable of salvation; but the main body of that people, and also the Waldenses, properly so called, rejected that opinion; and those of them who held that opinion, soon dwindled away and disappeared; there being no more heard of holding that opinion, till the rising of the German baptists in the year 1522."

Again, you tell us, "that the Mennonites were baptists." But this sect, who derived their name from *Mennon*, a famous leader among them, did not appear before the sixteenth century. You also tell us, "that the Petrobrussians were baptists." This people, who derived their name from Peter Bruis, the founder and leader of the Petrobrussians, appeared in the twelfth century, and were that sect of the Albigenses, whom we have just mentioned.

The various arguments and objections, which have been alleged, in order to disprove the aforesaid historical facts, appear to be very trivial and inconclusive. Some have objected to the aforesaid quotations from Origen, because they are taken out of a Latin translation, the original Greek not being extant. But how unreasonable and frivolous thus to object to a translation, which has all proper evidence of genuineness, with

out being able to confront it with the original? It has been pretended that the opinions and observations of the ancient fathers, concerning infant baptism, seem to be, in some instances, very strange and weak; but the peculiarities of honest men can never invalidate their testimony respecting plain matters of fact. Some have supposed that the *Donatists* were baptists, merely because they re-baptized in certain cases; but, upon inquiry, it has been found this people practised infant baptism, and only re-baptized those who had been baptized in the church of Rome, esteeming that church so corrupt as to render their baptism invalid. Several other sects have, occasionally, adopted the same, or a similar practice. In some instances the Manichees or Quakers have been taken for the baptists. Mr. *Stennet* recites a passage from the learned Dr. *Allix*, concerning one “Gundulphus and his followers, who being examined by the Bishop of Cambray, at a synod in the year 1025, denied that baptism was profitable to infants, and stated their reasons against baptizing them.” Here he stopped, omitting that part of their confession which did not suit his purpose, viz. “These men, at the same examination, being further interrogated, confessed that they thought water baptism of no use or importance to any one, infant or adult.” Dr. Wall corrected this unfairness and partiality of Mr. *Stennet*. But still

Dr. Gill, as Mr. Clark informs us, persisted in repeating the same mutilated quotation; and in the following vaunting manner, viz. "So we have testimonies, that pædobaptism was opposed 500 years before the affair of Munster."—Five hundred years before the affair of Munster! That is, in the eleventh century. And by whom was infant baptism then opposed? Not by the baptists, it seems, but by the quakers, who renounced and derided all water-baptism.

Some of the ancient writers have not distinguished, with sufficient accuracy, the several sects, who entertained different opinions concerning the rite of baptism. The quakers, who denied the use of water-baptism, with respect to adults as well as infants, and those sects who re-baptized in certain cases, although they did not deny or neglect infant baptism, have sometimes been incautiously called by the common name of anabaptists. Some learned men have, accordingly, supposed that the Petrobrussians were Manichees or Quakers; and that they never avowed the present baptists' principles. This however is a matter of but little importance. The Petrobrussians were a small, inconsiderable sect. They soon dwindled and disappeared.

Again, Dr. Gill and some other baptist writers very earnestly contend, that the ancient Waldenses baptized adults and denied infant baptism. This opinion has been de-

clared to be a mere "chimera or groundless fiction," by Mr. Clark, formerly of Salem, and Mr. Dickinson, formerly President of New-Jersey College, even after they had examined the history of that people with the greatest care and diligence. President Edwards, also, explored the vallies of Piedmont with the utmost scrutiny, but found no baptists there. Dr. Wall says, "no person who has written the history of the Waldenses hath represented them as denying infant baptism." We have already hinted at the occasion of the aforesaid mistake. The Waldenses were very zealously opposed to the corruptions and superstitious ceremonies of the Romish Church, and unwilling to have their children baptized by a popish priest. The papists, of course, became their enemies; and some of their writers represented them as being hereticks, and among other things charged them with the heresy of denying infant baptism. But the Waldenses, who were certainly best acquainted with their own principles and practice, have disclaimed the charge in the most unequivocal manner; declaring that they did baptize their infants, and proving from ancient records, that their forefathers had always practised infant baptism.

It is pretended, that some great and learned men, who were in the practice of baptizing infants, have had their doubts with respect to the propriety of infant baptism. If

this be true, it is a circumstance of very little importance in the present dispute. Every doctrine of the gospel has been doubted or denied by individuals; but other persons, who were better informed, have believed them fully, even without any doubting at all.

Mr. *Whiston* and a few others were ready to imagine, that the ancient fathers, when speaking concerning the baptizing of infants, had not reference to infants in days or years, but to infants in knowledge and faith. This pretended discovery appears to be the result of inextricable difficulty. These men felt the dilemma in which they were involved; and were convinced that their notions of baptism must be relinquished, unless they could find out, that all the fathers, in the primitive ages, used the word infants in a metaphorical sense; meaning thereby young people, or ignorant old people. This absurd opinion appears to have been their only alternative; and yet the absurdity is so evident that, instead of disproving the right of infant baptism, it affords a very strong, presumptive argument in its favour. Consult the ancient fathers; consult ecclesiastical history, and you will find full and clear proof that infant baptism was practised from the beginning of christianity; and that the practice did continue in the universal church without interruption or exception, until about the year eleven hundred and thirty after Christ. It might possibly have been op-

posed by a few individuals; but previous to the aforesaid period, we have no evidence from the writings and monuments of antiquity, that any body of professed christians or church, ever did deny the validity or lawfulness of infant baptism. That sect called Petrobrussians was not numerous. Their number, we have shown, soon diminished, and they became extinct; so that there was really no great, lasting opposition to infant baptism, before the sixteenth century.

You will now suffer me to propose a few questions, for your impartial consideration. You have said, “that the highly interesting contention, at the present, is, who shall reign over us, and who shall give us laws, Christ or Antichrist?” Our practice, with respect to baptism, you tell us, “is an ordinance of Antichrist, derived from ghostly Popes and the mother of harlots”—and represent those ministers, who attempt to prevent the baptists from making divisions and separations among the people of their charge, by warning them of their danger, “as acting in this matter the part of the old scribes, pharisees, and hypocrites, who would not enter the kingdom of heaven themselves, but hindered those who were entering.” You seem, however, to be aware, that the sentence is somewhat severe, and therefore endeavour to qualify the expression by saying, “I by no means suppose, that all who have done thus are indeed hypocrites, saye

“in this particular.” But, Sir, is not *he who wilfully offends in one point guilty of all?* Are the aforesaid and similar declarations consistent with civility or even decency? Are they consistent with that candour and charity which become a professed christian and especially a christian minister? *Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? Why dost thou judge, and why dost thou set at naught thy brother?* I will not undertake to answer these questions, but submit them to your own reflections. Does not our common Lord and Master claim the exclusive right of judging his own servants? I will therefore close with those awful words, with which you concluded your exhortation to your fathers and brethren in the ministry, &c. “I pray you remember one thing; with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged.”

Yours, sincerely,

JOHN REED.

A P P E N D I X.

QUESTION. *Can any good reason be given, why the mode of baptizing should not have been decided and fixed by Christ?*

Answer. The reason undoubtedly was this, that individuals might be at liberty to adopt such a mode as would be most agreeable to their wishes, and best suited to their circumstances. The indulgence, therefore, appears to discover great wisdom and goodness; especially when we consider the different conditions and prejudices of mankind—and that baptism was practised before our Saviour's time as well as since, in several modes and forms, both by Jews and Gentiles.

Question. *Can we suppose that if Christ and his Apostles had approved of sprinkling as being a lawful and valid mode of baptizing, any of the primitive converts to christianity would have preferred a total dipping?*

Answer. The supposition is perfectly natural, if we consider the ignorance and superstition of ancient times. It was not in the power of the Apostles to persuade the believing Jews to lay aside the grievous rite of

circumcision, and burdensome customs of Moses. Our Saviour said to his disciples, *I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* Some persons, in every age and country, have been disposed to despise small things—and such as could be obtained without any expense or difficulty. If Elisha had bidden the Syrian Leper to do some great and expensive thing, he would have done it with the utmost readiness. But he disdained the cheap and easy remedy proposed, and was greatly displeas'd with the prophet. When our Saviour wash'd his disciple's feet, Peter, at first, refus'd; but being told that washing was indispensably requisite, he insist'd upon being wash'd all over;—*not my feet only, but my hands and my head.*—And thus some persons would probably have thought in respect to the christian baptism;—that there was not sufficient significancy or validity in sprinkling or pouring a few drops of water; and consequently, that a total immersion appear'd to be necessary, or at least the most eligible mode of baptizing.

Question. Was not Christ baptized by immersion? and is it not a duty incumbent on us all to deny ourselves, and take up the cross, and follow him whithersoever he goeth, even into the watery grave?

Answer. We have already shewn, that Christ's baptism was his consecration to the sacerdotal office, and not intended as an example. It was, however, undoubtedly per-

formed by sprinkling, as the law of Moses expressly required. We are no where told he went into the water; and although it is once said in our translation that Christ came up *out of the water*, this manner of expression does not prove he was dipped. Besides, we have shown that the original word *apo*, which is here rendered *out of*, more properly and commonly signifies *from*, our translators themselves being judges. For in the five first books of the New Testament, they have translated the Greek word *apo*, into the English word *from*, 93 times oftener than they have translated it into the English words *out of*. This wonderful argument in favour of immersion, when weighed in the balance of truth is found wanting—lighter than vanity. How strange that it should ever influence any persons to be dipped, and especially from among those who have been baptized, in the name of the sacred Trinity, by affusion or sprinkling! And still more strange, that baptist ministers, themselves, should appear to place so much stress upon it!—And always mention it on baptizing occasions! I hope they are actuated by better motives than the consideration of its being popular and efficacious.

Question. But is not the mode of plunging, a cross—an instance of great self denial with which we ought to comply, in obedience to the authority of Christ?

Answer. Christ has required baptism, but not dipping. The mode of baptizing, we have shown, is left undecided. If any person, who has never been baptized, should prefer being dipped, we do not object. Our objection lies against the practice of re-baptizing, or of making the mode essential to the ordinance of baptism. This we view as the effect of superstition, and not of religion. Christ has required us to *deny ourselves of all ungodliness, and of every worldly lust, and take up the cross daily.* But every cross is not the cross of Christ. There are many instances of self denial which he has not required. The worshippers of Baal denied themselves, when *they cryed aloud and leaped upon the altar, cutting their flesh with knives and lancets, from morning till evening.* The superstitious papists deny themselves when they turn nuns and hermits; and in enduring and suffering a great variety of penance and bodily mortifications. Such kind of services, the Apostle tells us in Colos. 2d chap. 18th and 23d verses, *have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and a voluntary humility, and neglecting the body; or (as it might have been rendered) in punishing or not sparing the body.* But these are instances of self-denial which Christ has not required. There is therefore no obedience or virtue in them.

Question. Are not those persons who practise baptizing in the mode of sprinkling, rantists, in

the same sense that they are baptists that practise dipping?

Answer. They who practise sprinkling are *rantists*, in the same sense that those persons are *duprists*, who practise dipping; for the English word *dip*, is derived from the Greek word *duprō*, which signifies to dip and nothing else.

Question. *Why did not our translators render the original word rantizō, rantize, as they have rendered the original word baptizō, baptize?*

Answer. Rantizō signifies to sprinkle, exclusively. Our translators have therefore done right in translating it. But the word baptizō, admits of various significations; it was accordingly proper, that they should transcribe it. It belongs to expositors, and not to translators, to ascertain and fix the meaning of doubtful words.

Question. *Do not the Greek churches practise dipping; and is it not reasonable to suppose that they best understand their own language?*

Answer. The Greek churches universally practise infant baptism; and they commonly dip their infants, but not invariably, for the mode of baptizing is not considered by them as essential. Besides, the ancient Greek language has for a long time been a dead language. Although understood by the learned of all nations, there is no particular nation, at the present day, that understands and uses it.

Question. Is not the mode of baptizing by affusion or sprinkling, preferred and adopted by some persons, on the account of its being most convenient?

Answer. Baptism is but a ritual institution of a ceremonial kind. St. Paul thanked God that he had baptized so few; *for Christ did not send him to baptize, but to preach*; which was a business of more importance. Too much stress may certainly be laid upon the mode of baptism, and even upon the ordinance itself. But still the ordinance is very important, and must not be despised and neglected by any. The conveniency of pouring and sprinkling is certainly no objection. It must be considered as a very good argument in their favour; especially when compared with dipping which, in some cases, cannot be practised, and in many others would be very inconvenient and difficult. Christ hath no where restricted us to the mode of dipping. A restriction, therefore, of this nature appears to be as unreasonable as it is unscriptural.

Why should that liberty be retrenched which hath been allowed us by our common Saviour? Why should that baptism be considered and treated as a mere nullity or mockery, which God has so often owned and blessed? Why deprive weak, sick, dying christians, of that mercy which hath been indulged them by their Creator and Redeemer? Is no allowance to be made for coun-

tries and climates—for places, and times, and seasons, and conditions? I know it is pretended by some that dipping is always safe—that it never endangers the health or life, however disordered the person, or feeble his constitution, or cold the season. It is always proper to trust God. *But thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not cast thyself down from the pinnacle of the temple, expecting that he will give his angels charge to bear thee up in their hands, and prevent all harm.* Besides, in those northern regions, where bathing is seldom practised, baptism by immersion frequently appears shocking to persons of a timorous make, and especially to females. We are exhorted *to attend upon the Lord without distraction.* But is it in the power of every person to receive baptism by immersion, “without having his thoughts “deranged, his mind agitated, and his spirits “fluttered so as to render him incapable of “those sedate and devotional exercises, “which ought always to accompany this “solemn ordinance?”—Shall the opinion and practice of the baptists be made a rule and measure for every one? And must all the churches and all the christians in the world, who cannot conform with them herein, be unchurched and excommunicated, for their non-conformity? It is undeniably evident that many instances will occur on the account of sickness, the inclemency of the weather and scarcity of water, in which bap-

tism by immersion would be impracticable or dangerous; and of course, a variety of doubtful, perplexing cases. Who can tell what kind of disorder—what degree of infirmity—what severity of weather would afford a sufficient excuse for neglecting the ordinance of baptism? How long may a person wait for the perfect restoration of health—for a warm season—for a pleasant day—for rain in a dry time, to raise the streams? Or how far may an individual or a congregation lawfully go upon the sabbath, in order to find a place of water, suitable for baptism, according to the present mode of dipping? These and similar questions will frequently happen, which the most skilful physician or casuist can never solve. We plainly see the goodness and wisdom of God, in leaving the mode of baptizing undetermined. We may say of baptism, as our Saviour said concerning the sabbath, it was made for man, and not man for baptism. The Old Testament yoke was grievous and heavy, but *Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light*. He prefers mercy to the most costly and painful sacrifices; and has accordingly allowed us to adopt that mode of baptizing, which convenience, expediency, or the emergency of the case might dictate, provided this religious service be *performed decently and in order*.

Question. In what sense do baptized infants or children belong to the Church of Christ?

Answer. Before any question can be intelligibly solved, it must be correctly understood. It is therefore necessary, in the first place, to ascertain, accurately, what is here meant by *the Church*; for this word is frequently used in different senses—sometimes it is called the *invisible church*—sometimes the *universal, catholick or general church*, and sometimes *a church*.

By the *invisible church* is intended all those persons who now are, or shall be hereafter, sanctified, justified and glorified, whether infants or adults, baptized or unbaptized—the whole family of Christ—an innumerable company of angels and men. This is the invisible church of the first born. But secret things belong to God. No being, but the omniscient Jehovah, knows certainly what individuals belong to his invisible church.

Again, by the *catholick or general church*, we mean those persons in all nations and ages, whether adults or infants, who have been regularly admitted into the *visible church or covenant*, by receiving the external, appointed sign and token of initiation and membership. The general, visible church includes all those persons who have been thus visibly dedicated to God through Christ, and have not cut themselves off from this visible relation to him, by their open infidelity or wickedness.

Again, by *a church* we understand any number of persons, belonging to *the general, visi-*

ble church, who have or shall form themselves into a religious *society*, by voluntary association, or by consenting to a mutual covenant and articles of agreement, for the purposes of christian fellowship, communion and discipline. Churches thus formed and established, ought to be, and commonly are, in a state of christian fellowship and communion with each other. It is in *these particular churches* that christian discipline is exercised, and christian communion, at the Lord's table, is enjoyed. Professed christians, of every denomination, who belong to a particular church, are members also of the general church. But every member of the general church does not belong to a particular church.

The primitive christians gave themselves up to God; and also to each other. These were two distinct acts, and had reference to two distinct covenants or churches. In the first instance, they gave themselves up to God in baptism. They were not baptized, pursuant to the vote or order of any *particular church*, but by that authority which Christ committed to the Apostles and to their successors. They were by baptism constituted regular, visible members of the visible, general church. After this, they gave themselves up to each other. By mutual consent and agreement, they became members of a particular church, or rather of different,

particular churches, according to their local circumstances.

We are now prepared to solve the original question. Although infant children are not capable of that voluntary consent and mutual agreement, which are requisite to constitute them complete members of a *particular church*, and qualify them to participate in the discipline and communion of said church, yet they are capable of being constituted members of *the general church*. If believing parents are not authorized to subject their infant children to the regulations and jurisdiction of a *particular church*, they certainly have a right to devote and give them up to God according to the tenour of his everlasting covenant. Children thus devoted to God by baptism, the present appointed seal and token of his gracious covenant, are regular members of Christ's universal, visible church.

Question. Are the infant children of believing parents born members of the church, and consequently have a right as members to be baptized, or is their membership constituted by baptism?

Answer. A right to church membership is one thing, and regular admission as members into the visible, general church of Christ, is another. The children of believers are to be considered as heirs of the promise or covenant. Membership is their birth-right: they are accordingly to be admitted, by baptism, as rightful members. But the visible

covenant and its visible seal, in respect to them, must go together and not be separated. It is this publick, visible seal or token, which principally constitutes the publicity and visibility of the covenant and of membership; so that no unbaptized person can be a regular, visible member of the visible covenant, or visible, general church of Christ. He may have a right to be baptized, and in that way become a visible, regular member; but it is baptism which principally constitutes regular, visible membership.

Question. Is it certain, that the ancient Israelites and Jewish nation did belong to the general church of God?

Answer. The word *church*, is not used in the old testament; but St. Stephen, in the 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, expressly declares, that *Moses was in the church in the wilderness*. The Israelites and Jews are frequently called the *people of God*—the *people of his covenant*. A great variety of expressions are used which, in the language of Moses and the Prophets, are of the same or similar signification with the word *church*, as mentioned in the new testament. Besides, all the *males, adults, and infants*, who represented the whole nation, were circumcised. And circumcision, we are plainly told, was the *seal and token* of the everlasting covenant. The Apostle also says, *they were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses*; that is, into the religion

of Moses, who was a remarkable type of Christ;—the whole nation, consisting of *men, women and children*, were *baptized by the cloud, and by the sea*. Thus the covenant was renewed, and their church membership confirmed by baptism.

Question. If the infant children of believers are to be baptized because the children of Israel were circumcised, why should not they partake of the Lord's supper, as their children partook of the passover?

Answer. The passover was instituted, in order to perpetuate the memory of their miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The law of Moses therefore prescribed, *that when they were come into the land which God would give them, all their males should appear before him, annually, in order to keep the passover, in the place appointed for said purpose.* The same law provided *that they should not appear empty, but every one bring a gift in his hand.* Mr. Poole, Bp. Patrick, and other writers, learned in the Jewish laws and customs, say, that when children were twelve years old, their parents considered them as capable of presenting the aforesaid gift or offering—*capable also of enquiring and of understanding what was meant by this service, and by the passover*; they therefore now brought them to the temple, to observe the festival. Luke accordingly tells us, “that the parents of Jesus, went up every year to Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover; and when he

“*was twelve years old, they went up (with him) after the custom of the feast.*” It is not said nor intimated, that their son ever attended before. This was undoubtedly the first time. Being now twelve years old, he accompanied his parents to the festival, in conformity to the usual custom.—At this age, many are certainly capable of understanding the nature and design of the Lord’s supper, and of being benefitted by that sacrament. We ought however to recollect that the passover was one of the *Mosaic* rites, and appointed more than four hundred years after the Abrahamic covenant; and although this ancient rite is superseded by the Gospel, it has not *disannulled the covenant*. Infant children are still capable of being members of the covenant, or *general church of Christ*, although not qualified to participate in the discipline and communion of a particular church.

Question. Do not the scriptures require faith, and repentance, and the answer of a good conscience, as requisite to baptism? Are not infants incapable of these christian graces, and consequently disqualified for that ordinance?

Answer. I have heard much said concerning *believer’s baptism*—*believe and be baptized, &c.* but never happened to see these expressions in the sacred scriptures. Our Saviour said to his disciples, *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* Here *faith* is placed *before* baptism, and both are mentioned conjointly as requisite to salvation. Our

Saviour said to Nicodemus, *except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.* Here *baptism* is placed before faith, and both mentioned conjointly as requisite for admission into Christ's kingdom. A profession of faith, &c. was certainly required, by the Apostles, of *adults*, in order to their baptism, and is still requisite, and was equally necessary for the circumcision and baptism of adult persons or profelytes, under the Abrahamic covenant and Mosaic dispensation. With respect to this matter, there is no dispute. We and the baptists are entirely agreed. Various instances are recorded, in the new testament, of persons who professed their faith and were baptized. But a thousand such examples of adult baptism can never disprove the right of infant baptism, or furnish a single argument against it. Cannot adult believers be admitted unless infants are rejected? Is there not room enough in God's gracious covenant and general church for both? for believing parents and their children? The aforesaid objection, like a vapour beheld at a distance, looks as if there might be something in it, but upon a nearer view, is found to be wholly destitute of solidity and substance, as we have already shown, and shall have occasion to show more fully hereafter.

Question. Is not an express command, or explicit example necessary, in order to give per-

sons, whether adults or infants, a right to institutions of a positive nature?

Answer. Sufficient evidence of their right is necessary. But it is immaterial, whether this evidence arise from precept, example, or fair implication. Mankind are too apt to *limit the Holy One of Israel*, by specifying the kind and degree of evidence that would suit and satisfy them. The scribes and pharisees disregarded and despised all the evidence which our Saviour exhibited in vindication of his divine mission, while they constantly demanded some sign in proof of his Messiahship. At the time of his crucifixion, their language was, *if Jesus will come down from the cross, we will believe on him, but not otherwise.* It is a common but just observation, that such arguments as prove too much, prove nothing. Those premises or principles must not be admitted, which will produce inadmissible consequences. It is undoubtedly the duty of women to commune at the Lord's table; but there is no explicit command or example for female communion. It is the duty of christians to observe, in a religious manner, the first day of the week, but there is no explicit warrant for changing the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first. If the Apostles observed the first day of the week, this does not prove that they neglected the seventh. Some of the baptist denomination still think themselves bound, according to their principles, to observe the

seventh day, and are called *seven-day baptists*. A quaker would say, “there was no explicit warrant under the gospel institution for *water-baptism*; that *John* baptized *with water*, but *Christ* baptized *with the Holy Ghost*;—that he commissioned his Apostles to administer baptism, but did not order them to *use water*; and that it is nowhere said they did baptize *with water*.” At the house of *Cornelius*, Peter asked, “can any one forbid *water* that these should not be baptized?” But it is not said that any water was brought, or used. Philip and the Eunu- ch went down to, or into the water, and came up from, or out of the water, but it is not said that he baptized him *in the water* or *with the water*; and these two are the only instances, in which the word *water* is even mentioned. I know this manner of reason- ing is sophistical and fallacious, but it ap- pears to me that the baptists, in their zeal to overthrow the doctrine of infant baptism, have given up (to “their good friends the quakers”) the only tenable ground—the only sure defence of water baptism; and in- stead of founding their principles upon the baptism of *Christ*, they have attempted to found them upon the baptism of *John*, and have accordingly called themselves *baptists*, a name derived from *John the Baptist*, who, the quakers acknowledge, baptized with water. *John*, as we have observed, was the last and greatest prophet under the Mosaic

dispensation; *but the least in the kingdom of Christ is greater than he.* We have endeavoured to show from the scriptures, and from the writings of the ancient Fathers, that the infant children of christian parents have a right to be admitted, by baptism, into the visible church, or kingdom, or covenant of God. In the Abrahamic covenant, God granted the right of church membership to infants, and commanded that they should be admitted by a visible token. This church membership of infants has never been set aside, either by the authority of God, or of inspired men. It therefore continues in full force, under the sanction of heaven, even at the present day. “In the old testament
 “there is an explicit precept for the observ-
 “ance of the sabbath, and also an explicit
 “precept for the application of the seal of the
 “covenant to the infant seed of such parents
 “as are visible members; and as the change
 “of the sabbath, under the present dispensa-
 “tion, from the seventh to the first day of the
 “week, is not to be considered as a repeal of
 “the original precept, respecting the sab-
 “bath; so neither is the change of the seal
 “of the covenant, from circumcision to
 “baptism, to be considered as a repeal of
 “the original precept respecting the seal.”
 The church or covenant, and subjects there-
 of, are the same; and although the seal is
 varied as to its form, being changed from
 circumcision to baptism, it is still of the same

import, and applicable to the same subjects. Faith was required in order to the circumcision of adults, but it was not requisite in order to the circumcision of infants. Accordingly, a profession of the christian faith is still required, in order to the baptism of adults, but it is not requisite in order to the baptism of infants.—The Apostle says, *if any would not work, neither should he eat.* This saying is applicable to those adults, who are favoured with health and strength, because they are capable of working, but it must not be applied to the aged and infirm, or to infants, for they are incapable of work. Thus the Saviour says, *he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he who believeth not, shall be damned; and is condemned already.* This and similar expressions, are applicable to those adults who live in a christian land, because they are capable of believing the gospel. But such passages of scripture must not be applied to infants, for they are incapable of exercising this belief.—It does not follow, because faith is necessary in order to the baptism and salvation of adult persons, that infant children, who are incapable of faith, must not be baptized and cannot be saved. The cases are very different, and their right to the token of the covenant depends on circumstances which are entirely distinct. The adult person is required to believe, and present himself. The believing parent is required to present himself and his children to

God; and receive the external seal and token of the covenant. An express command was not requisite in order to the continuance of an old, approved, and established custom. But if any case can be conceived, in which an explicit and positive precept was indispensably necessary, it was certainly needed, in order to annul a divine and positive institute, which had been repeatedly renewed, and made the rule of constant practice, for two thousand years. Faithful Abraham was expressly constituted *the father of all them who believe*. Believers, of every nation, are counted for his seed, even as Isaac was; and consequently they and their children have the same right to baptism; the present seal of the Abrahamic covenant, which Isaac and his children had to circumcision. Christ did not come to revoke, but to confirm and extend the privileges of the original charter. It was foretold concerning him, that he should be “a light to lighten the
“Gentiles, and the glory of his people Is-
“rael; to perform the mercy promised unto
“the Fathers and to remember the holy cove-
“nant.”—“Behold,” says God, “I will lift
“up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my
“standard to the people; and they shall bring
“thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall
“be carried upon their shoulders.” These and similar predictions have been remarkably fulfilled. Thousands of infant children have been brought in the arms of their be-

believing parents to Christ; and have been dedicated to him in baptism.

Question. Were not those little children, concerning whom our Saviour said, “of such is the kingdom of God,” like them who sung hosanna in his temple, more properly adults than infants?

Answer. They were so small as to be brought by their parents—Christ actually took them into his arms; and they are expressly called *infants*. Those little children, who sang *hosanna to the Son of David*, were perhaps partly influenced by the example of the multitude that attended Christ as he rode in triumph to Jerusalem; for it seems, they were so young, that the scribes, though *much displeased*, did not think themselves authorized to reprove and silence them. They therefore came to Christ, in derision, saying, *hear-est thou what these say?* Christ replied, *yea; have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?* He did not endeavour to show, as some do at the present day, that those children had come to years of discretion; but quoted and applied a passage of scripture which expressly mentioned *babes* and *sucklings*—that is, *sucking babes*. Now, if the praises of Christ are perfected by *sucking babes*—if *infant* children belong to his kingdom, they certainly have a right to baptism, the visible sign and token of membership.

Question. The Apostles have told us, they baptized women as well as men—why did they not expressly mention the baptism of children?

Answer. We have already shown, that children are as plainly mentioned, as could be expected. If the Apostles had said, that men, women, and children, were baptized, we should probably have been told, as on other occasions, that these children were ten or twelve years old. There was not, however, the same occasion or necessity for mentioning expressly the baptism of children. For as women under former dispensations had been considered and treated as members of the covenant, and entitled to all its privileges, without receiving the external token of membership, it was necessary under the gospel institution, that their baptism should be explicitly mentioned, in order to remove all doubts, and show that persons of both sexes were now alike the proper subjects of this ordinance. But there could be no question respecting infants; for every one knew that the *seal* of the covenant had always been applied to them, and was still their *right*, by an express and unrevoked institution. Besides, it is worthy of our particular notice, that the words men and women, are often used in order to distinguish the sexes, without reference to their age. We sometimes call a female infant or child, a woman; and a male child, we call a man. Our Saviour says, “when a woman is in travail,

“ the hath sorrow, because her hour is come,
 “ but as soon as she is delivered, she remem-
 “ bereth no more her sorrow, for joy that a
 “ *man* is born into the world.” Here a new-
 born infant is expressly called a *man*. In
 another place he observes, “ if a *man*, on
 “ the sabbath day, received circumcision,
 “ that the law of Moses might not be broken,”
 &c. Here again the word *man* means an *in-*
fant eight days old. The law of Moses did
 not require, that adults should be circum-
 cised on the Sabbath ; but in the Abrahamic
 covenant, infant circumcision was expressly
 restricted to the 8th day. The 8th day
 would sometimes happen upon the sabbath :
 In which case, Moses ordained that the law
 of the sabbath should yield to the law of cir-
 cumcision. As circumcision, the original
 seal of the covenant, was affixed to the males
 only, the Apostles were very careful to in-
 form us, that baptism, the present seal of the
 same covenant, is to be affixed to persons of
 both sexes. St. Paul tells us, in Gal. iii, 27,
 28, 29, that there is no longer any difference
 or exception. “ For as many of you as
 “ have been *baptized* into Christ, have put on
 “ Christ. There is neither *male* nor *female*,
 “ ye are all one in Christ. *And if ye be Christ’s*,
 “ then are ye *Abraham’s seed and heirs accord-*
 “ *ing to the promise.*” Thus, in the aforesaid
 passage, instead of using the words men and
 women, the Apostle has cautiously used the

words male and female, which are equally applicable to adults and infants.

Question. Did any of those adult persons, whom the Apostles and ancient Fathers baptized, descend from christian parents?

Answer. Some children were undoubtedly adults, when their parents believed. These of course were not baptized in their infancy. Some, perhaps, as at the present day, who did believe, neglected to be baptized. And it is possible, that a few who were baptized, refused to present their infant children to God in baptism. But we have no account that the Apostles ever baptized a single adult, who was born of christian parents. We have, in the new testament, the history of their proceedings, for thirty years after the ascension of Christ, during which period, there is not one instance of baptism, that in the least degree favours the baptist's principles. Those very adults, whom the Apostles and ancient fathers baptized, were undoubtedly converts from among the unbelieving Jews and heathens; and consequently were not entitled to baptism in their infancy—nor indeed until they had made a profession of faith. Concerning the baptism of such persons, there is no dispute. We are all agreed in opinion and practice. But what is to be done with the infant children of these believing profelytes? This is the question. Are the infant children of believers to be baptized? The baptists say no!—That their baptism must be

omitted until they become adults and make a personal profession of their faith. But where, my baptist friends, is your "explicit warrant or positive precept" for this? I have never seen it. Your boasted argument from scripture "precedents and examples" will not apply in the present case; and this is the real point of controversy between us. On the other side, we have shown that infants, pursuant to an express precept, were admitted as rightful members, into the Abrahamic covenant, and received the external token of membership—that this covenant has never been *disannulled*; nor any alteration been made respecting the original right of infants to its external seal and privileges—that the infant children of believers now have the same right to baptism, which infants formerly had to circumcision—that the Apostles and ancient fathers did accordingly baptize believing parents and their households. St. Paul circumcised Timothy when an adult, but he did not baptize him. He was probably baptized in his infancy or early childhood, for his mother was a believer. Those instances of adult baptism, so often mentioned by the opposers of infant baptism, are totally inapplicable. These adults were not the offspring of believers, but of infidels—persons who had been converted from Judaism and heathenism to the belief and profession of christianity.

Question. Is it certain that infant baptism was practised among the Jews before the time of John and of Christ?

Answer. We have already shown, that this was the Jewish practice, in respect to those Gentile profelytes who embraced their religion. This fact, I believe, is expressly stated by all learned historians and commentators, who have written upon the religious rites and customs of that people. Dr. Wall and Dr. Prideaux have been quoted as authorities. The same practice is expressly mentioned, when treating of profelytes, by *Selden, Ainsworth, Lightfoot, Hammond, Poole, Stackhouse, Cruden*, and by the authors of the *Dictionary of the Bible, &c.* Mr. *Echard*, in his ecclesiastical history, says, “the usual way in which the Jews made profelytes, was by circumcision, baptism and sacrifice, if they were males; and by baptism and sacrifice, if they were females, as Maimonides and the chief of the Rabbins assure us. Baptism was an ancient custom among the Jews. It was in use many ages before our Saviour’s incarnation. As circumcision was applied to the children of the Jews, so was baptism also to the children and infants of the profelytes.” Some of the aforesaid authors are more particular than others. They mention not only males, but females and infants, as well as adults. Several of these writers observe, that children, under twelve years of age, were baptized

on account of their parents; and that this practice of infant baptism has been in use among the Jews from the days of Moses even to the present time. The Jews considered themselves as nationally baptized into the religion of Moses, *by the cloud and by the sea*; and as there was to be but *one law for the stranger and for those of their own nation*, they initiated proselytes, adults and infants, by baptism, &c. Being thus admitted into the Jewish church, they had a right to all the religious privileges of native citizens.

Question. Was the baptism which John the Baptist administered, the christian baptism?

Answer. The new testament, or gospel dispensation, did not take place, until the death of the *testator*. John was not an *Apostle* of Christ, but his *forerunner*—his *messenger*.—Being the last and greatest prophet under the Mosaic law, he came to *prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight*. He told his hearers *that the kingdom of heaven was at hand*, but it had not commenced. The ministration and baptism of John were preparatory to the ministration and baptism of the Apostles. Accordingly, it appears from Acts xix. 2, 3, 4, 5, that those persons to whom he administered baptism, were afterwards baptized into the *name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. This was the christian baptism, as instituted by Christ himself.

Question. Did John baptize infants?

Answer. The inspired writers are entirely silent respecting this matter. We must therefore reason from other circumstances; for it cannot be inferred from *mere silence*, that he did, or did not baptize them. It is no where said or intimated that John baptized any *females*, and yet he probably did baptize *women* as well as men, and *infants* as well as adults. For the Jews were in the practice of baptizing their Gentile proselytes, whether male or female, adult or infant; and they expected, when the Messiah or his messenger should come, that the people of their own nation, of both sexes and of all ages, would be again baptized, as had been the case at the Red Sea. Besides, we ought to remember, that it was expressly foretold concerning the forerunner of Christ—"That he should turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."—Mal. iv. 6. When we consider the habits and circumstances of the Jews, nothing can be more natural, than to suppose they brought their children with them to the baptism of John. There is, to say the least, as much evidence that he baptized infants, as that he baptized women.

Question. Did the disciples of Christ, before our Saviour's crucifixion, baptize infants?

Answer. They certainly did baptize a vast number of persons. But the thing is very slightly mentioned—in the most general

terms, and by but one of the Evangelists.—Not a single man, woman, or child, is named or specified. We may therefore fairly conclude, that they baptized persons of both sexes and of all ages, according to the expectation and custom of the Jews on other occasions; especially when we consider that these itinerant disciples of Christ were very numerous.—Besides the twelve Apostles, he sent forth seventy at a time, directing them to go from city to city, and from house to house—in order to *seek and save the lost sheep of the house of Israel*—such as could not conveniently attend on the ministration and baptism of John, at a great distance from home, in the wilderness, and in the open field. It appears highly probable from these circumstances, that the disciples of Christ baptized a greater proportion of women, and particularly of children, than John; especially when we consider that they were expressly ordered, upon entering a house, *if the Son of Peace should be there*, to bless the house. Now, if the household—the children, had a right to the blessing of Christ or of his gracious covenant, on account of the believing parent, they certainly had a right to baptism, the seal and confirmation of the promised or covenanted blessing.

Question. Did the Apostles after the resurrection of Christ, and after the christian baptism was instituted, baptize the infant children of believing parents?

Answer. Infants were not excepted in the commission which Christ gave to his Apostles, nor is it any where said or even intimated, that they were not baptized. The terms used in the apostolick commission are of the most general and comprehensive nature. Infants constitute a considerable part of every *nation*. They are capable of being taught by Christ, and of being enrolled as disciples or scholars in his school, for the purpose of securing to them a religious and virtuous education. On the day of Pentecost, we are told, *they who gladly received the word were baptized.*—It is further observed—*and the same day, there were added unto them about three thousand souls.* The word *souls*, is a general term, and as applicable to infants as to adults. Some persons who believed and were baptized, had no children; but others who were blessed with children, undoubtedly presented them to the Lord in baptism. Accordingly, when Lydia believed, *she and her household* were baptized.—When Stephanus believed, *he and his household* were baptized.—When the jailer believed, *he and all his* were baptized, *straightway*. I know it is pretended by some, that these children were probably old enough to believe, and to be baptized on the account of their own faith. But this is mere conjecture. We are informed the parents believed, but it is not said their children believed, and we have no right to be *wise above what is written*.

Question. But has not Saint Paul told us that the household of Stephanus, whom he baptized, "have addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints?" And does not this imply they were adults and believers?

Answer. It is said, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, xvi. 15, that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints; but then this Epistle was written in the 56th year of Christ, which was undoubtedly 20 years or more, after Saint Paul had baptized the household of Stephanus; for we are expressly told that this house was the first fruits of Achaia—the very first, who had been baptized in that province or country, of which Corinth was the capital. The objection, therefore, instead of invalidating, confirms the argument in favour of infant baptism. For on supposition they received baptism in their infancy or early childhood, the interval between the time in which the Apostle baptized these children, and the time in which he wrote the aforesaid Epistle, was sufficiently long for them to mature in age and discretion, and become addicted to the ministry of the Saints.

Question. Did not the household of the Jailor believe before they were baptized? Is it not expressly said that he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house?

Answer. The seeming ambiguity of the aforesaid words would have been in a great measure prevented, if our translators had

placed them according to the original order. The Greek is—*Kai ēgalliasato panaikì pepisteukōs tō Theō*. And he rejoiced with (or in) all his house, believing in God. Mr. Henry, in his annotation on this passage, says, it might have been rendered thus: “Having believed in God, he rejoiced his house all over—in every apartment.” The original word used, is not *sunpanoikì*, but *panoikì*, an adverb, and by Dr. Hemmenway and various critical writers, is rendered *domestically*. He rejoiced domestically, or all his house over—he went from room to room, rejoicing in every apartment. It is highly probable, that his family participated with him in this new and unusual joy. This circumstance, however, is not expressed in the Greek. Both words are used in the singular number. The jailer *believed*—the jailer *rejoiced*. But it is said, the Apostles preached the word to him, to all that were in his house! The prisoners and domesticks were, undoubtedly, all present. When the jailer enquired *what he should do to be saved*, Paul and Silas replied, *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house*. These words agree exactly with what our Saviour said to Zaccheus. *This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham*. The promise made to Abraham was, *I will be a God to thee and thy seed*. Peter therefore said to his hearers, *repent and be baptized, for the promise is to you and your children*. The jai-

ler was a Gentile ; but upon his believing the gospel he and his children became entitled to that *salvation which was of the Jews*—to that family or household blessing which was promised to *faithful Abraham and his seed*. Accordingly, *he and all his were baptized straightway*.

Question. Is it certain, that infant baptism was practised in the age which immediately followed the Apostles ?

Answer. We have already shown from history, that infant baptism was certainly practised in the second and in the third centuries. In the beginning of the fourth century, Constantine declared in favour of christianity. Persecution ceased. More books were accordingly written, than in any preceding age. All doubts and disputes about infant baptism are now entirely removed. The testimonies of writers are very numerous, full and undeniable ; and Dr. Wall tells us, “ that not one of them speaks “ of it as new ; or as a thing which needed “ proof ; but as a practice supposed and ordinarily known. It was never enacted by “ the authority or enjoined by the canons “ of any council ; because no church or sect “ of christians had ever denied it. On the “ contrary, they occasionally mention infant “ baptism as a customary rite, that had always “ been practised.”

Question. If it should be admitted, that infant baptism was thus practised in the second, third

and fourth centuries, will it follow that the practice had been handed down to them even from the times of the Apostles?

Answer. The proof amounts to the clearest demonstration. The primitive churches throughout the world were undoubtedly formed by the Apostles upon one and the same plan. The apostolick age continued until about the end of the first century. Those christians, who lived in the second, third, and even fourth century, must have known perfectly, infallibly, and universally, how the Apostles practised. They could not possibly be ignorant or mistaken respecting a practice of such general concern and notoriety. It is now almost two hundred years since our forefathers landed in Plymouth. Every person of information among us knows, that the first settlers of this country generally believed in the doctrine of infant baptism, as being a divine institution. The commencement of the fourth century was but about two hundred years after the Apostles. Those ancient christians certainly knew how the Apostles practised, in this respect; and undoubtedly adhered closely to the example which they had set them.

Question. *If infant baptism were practised by the Apostles, during the first century, and by the ancient christians in the second and third centuries, why have they not mentioned it more frequently, and explicitly in their writings?*

Answer. The reasons are very obvious. A practice which has obtained and become universal, which meets with no opposition, and about which there is no dispute, needs no arguments or advocates for its defence. There is no occasion why it should be even mentioned by any writer, unless for the sake of illustrating or establishing some other point that may be disputed. Thus it was with respect to infant circumcision. This ancient rite was constantly used from the infancy of Isaac till the time of Moses, a term of more than four hundred years, and yet it is not once hinted during that long period. After Moses, there is not one example mentioned of infant circumcision in all the old testament, although it was daily practised for the space of fifteen hundred years. We ought also to consider, that in ancient times the art of printing was not understood. But few books were written; and those few in the most concise manner. Some of these books have been lost, and some destroyed by the enemies of christianity. But still, as has been observed, infant baptism is mentioned by a number of the most respectable fathers, who lived in the second and third centuries. It is mentioned as a universal, incontestable practice, authorized by the Apostles themselves. In every instance, it is mentioned, *occasionally*, and as an *indisputable* fact, in order to confute some heresy, or prove some doctrine that was then disputed. The historical

evidence, in proof of infant baptism, appears to be conclusive, and of such a nature as might have been reasonably expected. In the fourth century, it is so full and forcible, the baptists themselves allow, that the infant children of professed believers were then generally baptized.

Question. Did none of the ancient fathers oppose infant baptism?

Answer. Tertullian, of the third century, a man of odd and singular notions, is the only person who objected or advised to delay the baptizing of infants. His testimony, however, affords an unanswerable argument in favour of the antiquity and authenticity of this doctrine. For he acknowledged that the practice did prevail. He did not pretend that it was unlawful, a nullity, or an innovation. It is not at all strange, that a christian ordinance should be opposed by one or two persons, in the course of several hundred years; but very remarkable, that the number of opposers should be so small and inconsiderable. There was no church, nor any sect of christians, who held to water-baptism, and denied infant baptism, before the twelfth century.

It is impossible to account for the early, the general, and constant practice of infant baptism, upon baptists' principles. We are obliged to believe, that the Apostles did baptize infants. Every argument from the aforesaid statement of facts, from analogy,

and from experience, favours this opinion. The baptists tell us, that all the primitive and ancient churches were of their denomination. Such general, indefinite assertions are more easily made than proved. Why do they not mention some *particular minister or church*; and let us know in what *nation or country* they existed? This has never been done nor attempted. New customs and practices are commonly introduced by slow degrees, and not without much difficulty. The founder or leader of any new sect or party becomes notorious. The age and place in which he lived are known. His peculiar sentiments are warmly disputed and opposed, being contrary to the established habits and prejudices of the people. But *no person* can be named who brought in the supposed heresy of infant baptism. *No time or country* can be fixed upon, in which it had its origin. How then is it conceivable that *so great a change* with respect to an article of *fundamental* importance, which destroyed the *very being* of the church, could commence, and prevail, and become universal, without the aid of any authority, civil or ecclesiastical, and without opposition.

Question. Have not many great corruptions, such as image worship, transubstantiation, &c. universally prevailed among christians?

Answer. These and similar corruptions never did become general. Besides, they were constantly opposed by numerous indi-

viduals and synods, while the arm of civil and military power was strenuously exerted to establish and support them. History informs us concerning the rise and progress of error or heresy in general—the ways and means by which it has been introduced and supported—that innovations have always met with opposition—that numberless books have been written in order to confute and suppress them. But not one of the ancient Fathers—no christian author for fifteen hundred years, has favoured the world with a single pamphlet against the doctrine of infant baptism.

If the practice of baptizing infants had been contrary to the example and injunction of the Apostles, opposers would have risen up against it, in every part of Christendom. But we read of no such opposition. The practice universally prevailed, not only among the orthodox christians, but also among sectaries of every description, even of the most discordant and unfriendly sentiments, while engaged in angry contentions. It prevailed in the earliest and purest ages of christianity, before popery existed, and in those countries where its influence never extended; throughout all the churches in Asia and Africa, as well as in Europe. So that not a single baptist church has been or can be found for more than eleven hundred years after Christ, and but one small society of that denomination, previously to the sixteenth century.

From these facts, fully and strongly attested, it appears that the practice of baptizing infants was primitive and apostolick; and that the first christian churches, in all places, were formed and established upon *this* scheme.

Question. But after all that has been said, what good does infant baptism do?

Answer. With equal propriety it might be asked, what good did infant circumcision do? What good does it do to pray for our children? I have ever viewed these and similar questions, as impertinent and extremely improper. For we are ignorant and short-sighted creatures. When God commands, it is always our duty to obey, even if we cannot see any connexion between the means appointed and the end proposed. To disobey, on this account, would be the height of impiety and presumption. The divine constitution is such, that the obedience of parents always proves beneficial, not only to themselves, but to their children; but disobedience is injurious to both. For *the Lord our God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon their children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them who love him, and keep his commandments.*

I do not, however, mean to intimate, that we can perceive no good tendency in the doctrine of infant baptism. The doctrine itself is calculated to teach us several very

important truths, and in the plainest manner. It teaches us that God and Christ have exercised and expressed the most affectionate regard and tender care for little children, in their redemption, and in making the most wise and merciful provision for their religious education.—It teaches us that they are in a salvable state, and that their sanctification, and justification, and salvation, are to be sought for, and expected through the merits and mediation of the Saviour. The welfare of children, both for time and eternity, very much depends upon their being religiously educated. Those parents, who dedicate their infant children to God in baptism, hereby engage solemnly to educate them in the ways of religion and virtue. By these engagements, their natural obligations are strengthened, and they are reminded of their duty. These engagements, which are made publickly, in the presence of many witnesses, the members of the church are also bound to see fulfilled. “For they have covenanted
“with God and with each other, to exercise
“mutual watchfulness and to reciprocate
“every faithful and brotherly office; and in
“particular, to watch over each other, in
“respect to the duty which they severally
“owe their children; and in an affectionate,
“christian manner, offer such advice, admo-
“nition, and reproof, as occasions may re-
“quire, and wisdom dictate; and on the
“grounds of God’s gracious promises, to

“ pray without ceasing, that the spirit of the
 “ Lord may be poured out upon them and
 “ his blessing on their offspring.” In this
 way, it is incumbent on the church to watch
 over these baptized children, and discipline
 them through the medium of their parents,
 who are responsible for their conduct. Thus
 infant baptism appears calculated to produce
 many and great advantages to children; and
 especially by securing to them, in the most
 effectual manner, a religious education.
 Hence,

If children are the proper subjects of bap-
 tism, it is certainly the indispensable duty of
 parents to present them to God in this ordi-
 nance, and train them up for him. And ye
 children, *obey your parents in the Lord, for this
 is right—this is the first commandment with
 promise. Be careful to know the God of your
 fathers, and serve him, with a perfect heart and
 willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts,
 and understandeth all the imaginations of the
 thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found of
 you; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off
 forever.*

The preceding observations teach us the
 unwarrantableness of re-baptizing. We have
 shown that infants are the proper subjects of
 baptism, and that affusion or sprinkling is a
 proper and valid mode of administering the
 ordinance; to re-baptize then must be con-
 trary to the will of God—a vain repetition,
 that cannot be justified. The practice leads

directly to the baptist doctrine of close communion, and to the most unhappy divisions and separations. For the baptists, considering themselves as the only true church, are very apt to think it their duty to divide and destroy other churches and christian societies. In consequence of this sentiment, we frequently see parishes, and neighbourhoods, and families divided—husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters separated.

Our common Lord is undoubtedly willing to admit to his table christians of all denominations. But the baptists will not admit any to their table of communion, but those of their own persuasion. They will allow none of their community to commune with the members of other churches ; not even with their own parents or husbands, if of another denomination. The effects are sometimes extremely disagreeable and distressing, especially when near and dear relations and connections are induced to leave the fellowship and communion of those with whom, like holy David and his friend, *they have taken sweet counsel together, and have gone in company to the house of God, and table of Christ.* But, the baptists tell us, they cannot commune, nor allow of communion, with *unbaptized* persons ; and that we ourselves would object and refuse. There is, however, a very great difference between a person who has received baptism by affusion or sprinkling, according

to the dictates of his own conscience, and one that has never been baptized, in any mode whatsoever. The quakers are the only sect who deny water-baptism; they also deny the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and of course, never wish for communion in that ordinance.

Again, the baptists tell us, they do not pretend to what is commonly called *infallibility*, but make the *infallible word* of God the rule of their conduct. This does not remove the difficulty. It is a mere evasion. They will not allow the word of God to be a rule for others; but set up their own *interpretation* as the only standard for all. The quakers will say, that the *word* of God is an *infallible* rule, but then, *the Spirit, or Light within them*, is the only true interpreter. The papists will acknowledge that the word of God is the infallible rule, that is, for them, but not for others; for they alone can interpret it rightly; that St. Peter has committed to *them* the *key of knowledge* and of the *church*; and, consequently, that they *can open and no man shut, and shut, and no man open*. Thus they *exalt themselves above all that is called God and is worshipped*. They exalt their own interpretation of God's word, above the word of God itself, *which word, we are told, God has magnified above all his name*.

The only way to avoid these difficulties and absurdities, is, for professed christians of all denominations, to consider the sacred

scriptures (and not their own construction) as the established rule of faith and practice, while they mutually agree to embrace each other as brethren—as disciples of Christ, their common Lord and Master, and as members of his visible church or kingdom.

FINIS.

A. D. 1806.

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ERRATA.

Page 31, fourth line from the bottom, and page 99, second line from the top, instead of *father's* read *fathers*'.

Page 184, first line, after the word *rich*, add the words—
in his death.

Page 207, in the sixth line from the bottom, in the word *baptisēs* add the letter *i* between the *t* and *s*.

Page 224, eleventh line from the top, instead of *they* read *be*.







